

# THE LIVING AGE.

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VOL. CLXXX.

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## HELPLESSNESS.

O I could wish the dreams that break  
My Lady's rest were for my sake:  
But ah, she only dreams away  
The sorrows of another day.

She will awake with saddened eyes,  
And her face scarred with night-long  
sighs,

And pale lips tenderly adroop  
With weariness; and all the troop  
Of baby smiles that play about  
Her dimples, peeping in and out,  
By their Nurse Sorrow put to bed,  
Now that the playmate Joy is fled.  
Though, answering, she smiles at me  
And leans her lips, yet I can see  
Dim sorrow lurking like a veil  
Across those eyes and lips so pale;  
And, gone the moment's laughing  
grace,  
Sadness once more invades her face.

O I could wish the dreams that break  
My Lady's rest were for my sake:  
But ah, she only dreams away  
The sorrows of another day.

*Francis Gerald Miller.*

*The Westminster Gazette.*

## THE LAST JOURNEY.

Thou, O Soul, alone must go  
(Non timebis, Anima)  
Thro' the passage of the snow  
(Vix finis Patria).

Thou must come to thy Desire  
(Non timebis, Anima)  
Thro' the frost and thro' the fire  
(Vix finis Patria).

Thou must come to thy Delight  
(Non timebis, Anima)  
From the deep and thro' the night  
(Vix finis Patria).

Thou, O Soul, alone must fare  
(Non timebis, Anima)  
Thro' the solitudes of air  
(Vix finis Patria);  
At thy journey's end is rest.  
Quia Christus passus est.

*R. L. Gales.*

*The British Review.*

## THE STEP-CLEANER.

Fresh as a stream, the April morning  
fills

With airy gold the gray and hollow  
street;

Blank windows glimmer, soon the  
highway thrills

With far-off cries, and sound of  
early feet.

The daybreak tide along the pavement  
brightens

Door after door, until, with mocking  
gleam,

It crowns a weary child, who kneels  
and whitens

The step, and labors in a waking  
dream.

Light falls upon the little sore, red  
hands,

The back already bowed, the languid  
face;

A withered piece of childhood! where  
she stands

Morning and youth rise up bereft of  
grace.

She drifts, an atom among lives un-  
heeding,

Blind, worn and careless as the  
stones they tread.

The tireless mills of poverty are knead-  
ing

Her youth into their dark and bitter  
bread.

And yet—because the morning splendor  
calls,

And town birds waken, and the sun  
is strong,

Because the springtime dances on the  
walls,

Even this child lifts up her broken  
song.

She pipes an echo of some street-born  
ditty;

A linnet from his stifling cage re-  
plies.

Round them the sullen clangor of the  
City

Rolls up toward the all-receiving  
skies.

*Rosalind Travers.*

*The New Witness.*

## PRESIDENT WILSON'S LATIN-AMERICAN POLICY.

When an American talks about the foreign policy of the United States he has especial, almost exclusive, reference to Latin-America, for there is the American sphere of influence. Outside of that, in the European sense, the United States has no foreign policy, and with the affairs of Europe it has only passing concern. It is true that in recent years the United States has, here and there, touched the fringe of European politics, but so timidly that it seemed almost as if it felt necessary to apologize for being found in strange company and was in doubt as to the welcome it would receive. When the United States became a signatory to the Hague Convention, the convention was ratified on the part of the United States only after the Senate had adopted a declaratory resolution that nothing contained in the convention should be construed as causing the United States to depart from its traditional policy of non-interference in the affairs of any European State, nor should anything in the convention be construed as inviting the interference of Europe in questions purely American. The United States was represented at the Algeiras Conference because Mr. Hay sat in the State Department and Mr. Roosevelt in the White House, and both were men who appreciated the importance of the voice of the United States not being silent when *Weltpolitik* was under discussion; but a great many Americans questioned the wisdom or propriety of the United States becoming involved in a political question purely European, and no doubt the matter would have provoked even greater discussion had one American out of ten thousand known where Algeiras was or why the conference met. The American cares little, and knows less,

about European politics. They do not interest him because they do not touch him. They do not affect his well-being or his comfort. They are too remote to influence the price of cotton or corn, or to turn the scale in an election.

But when you talk about the politics of Latin-America, then the American begins to show an interest. That, he says, "is where we belong." Scratch Latin-America, and you find the Monroe Doctrine. To the American the Monroe Doctrine is like God or religion to a small child: something fearful, something to inspire awe, something, if necessary, to fight for. But the one no more than the other has any real understanding. It is sufficient, to the American, that he has the Monroe Doctrine to cherish, which will in turn protect him. Protect him from what? That he does not know exactly, nor is it necessary that he should be too explicit. Men can make a religion of political dogma and bring themselves to believe it is their salvation.

It has often been said that there is no continuity of American policy in dealing with Latin-America. This is a mistake. Fundamentally, that policy is as firmly established as the Constitution or the right of trial by jury. It is part of the national tradition. One cannot lightly conceive the time to come when juries will be abolished any more than one can imagine the spontaneous abandonment by the American people of the Monroe Doctrine as their polity. But while it is true that the Monroe Doctrine is fixed, determined, and accepted, and the President is governed by it, he is given wide discretion as to its interpretation and its application to each instance as it may arise. Much depends

upon the individual, not a little upon the spirit of the times. There have been some Presidents whose policy has been that of *laissez faire*, there have been some Presidents whose watchword was "Forward." The State Department has swung between the poles of "dollar diplomacy" and *caveat emptor*. One Administration has thought it was not only its duty to help the American dollar in Latin-America, but that it was doing only half its duty if it did not throw its protection around that dollar. Another Administration has held that it owed no more obligation to an American dollar in Venezuela than it did in New York, and that the American who went South did so at his own risk, knew the risk he was incurring, and must not complain if his venture was a failure. To that extent, but to that extent only, the charge is true that there has been no continuity in American policy.

Mr. Wilson is a man of ideals, and he proposes to join his ideals to the practical and accomplish practical results. It will be interesting to watch the experiment and see whether it will succeed. It is not to be dismissed lightly, or to be sneered at as visionary or the dream of a theorist. Truth is that the responsibility for the revolutions, murders, and disorder that for many years have been the normal conditions in the turbulent States of Latin-America rests, to a large extent, with Europe no less than America. It is commonly said that the people of the Southern American Republics are unfitted for self-government, and a Republican form of government is, and must be, a farce, as only a dictator who rules with an iron hand can keep even a semblance of order. No one will deny the correctness of this generalization, but it must not be forgotten that revolutions have been encouraged and disorder fomented be-

cause outsiders have hoped to gain by a change of rulers or the defeat of a so-called political party.

There has probably been no revolution in Central America in recent years that has not been financed or encouraged or planned in New York. The supplying of arms and ammunition to Latin-American revolutionists is a recognized trade, perfectly legitimate and respectable according to commercial ethics, but questionable as to its morality. There is no pretence about this trade. Arms are not put into the hands of men to help them to overthrow a tyrant, or that they may worship the God of their fathers, or that liberty may not perish; for there is little choice between Presidents and their rivals or dictators and would-be dictators. A Latin-American revolution is financed for profit, and not for the glory of republicanism. So long as a few cases of rifles and a few thousand rounds of ammunition can be bought in New York or New Orleans and shipped south, so long will revolution flourish.

Latin-America has been exploited for the benefit of the rest of the world. Mr. Wilson did not exaggerate when he said in his Mobile speech that these States "have had harder bargains driven with them in the matter of loans than any other peoples in the world. Interest has been exacted of them that was not exacted of anybody, because the risk was said to be greater, and then securities were taken that destroyed the risks. An admirable arrangement—for those who were forcing the terms. I rejoice in nothing so much as in the prospect that they will now be emancipated from these conditions, and we ought to be the first to take part in assisting emancipation." It was perhaps inevitable that in the past there should have been this exploitation. Latin-America was a risk, it needed huge



sums for its development, and capital, that could find safe employment at fair interest with security at home, was not to be tempted into the unknown unless the inducement was made correspondingly advantageous. Like the individual whose credit is doubtful, the security demanded was heavier and the interest exacted larger, and adventurers and "shoe-string" promoters, with nothing to lose and a great deal to gain, promising much and performing little, flocked there, obtaining concessions and privileges, taking a gambler's chance of being able to capitalize their paper properties in New York or London, and becoming rich at one stroke. And the chances were so many and the profits were so large, when the scheme succeeded. Latin-America has inexhaustible riches. Its wealth lies beneath the earth and on the surface, waiting only for man, with capital, to harvest it. Its soil has but to be scratched to yield its crop. Mine and forest and stream all give their tribute.

These are the great prizes for which promoters and speculators have played. To obtain them they have often engineered revolutions, as that was the surest, and frequently the only, way of obtaining what they wanted. The Latin-American States, those especially in which revolution is chronic, have constitutions that read well and theoretically guarantee to their citizens life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and secure to them the free expression of political opinion, but actually Presidents are elected, not by the ballot but by the bayonet, and the only way by which an opposition can express its dissent is through revolution. It is the Latin way of going to the country, and it is a good deal cheaper and quicker than the Saxon way. There are no speeches from the hustings running over many

weeks as in England, or a furious campaign lasting for months as in America, dislocating business and disturbing the orderly conduct of affairs. In a Latin-American state sometimes there is bloodshed, but the usual revolution, if not entirely bloodless, is not excessively sanguinary, and it does not last long. When a President or a Presidential candidate is assassinated or falls beneath a bullet leading his forces, or concludes discretion to be the better part of valor and runs away so that he may return to take another chance some other day, his followers for the time being accept what they cannot alter. They are disappointed, just as party men are in England and America when an election goes against them, but they console themselves with the hope of being able to bowl their opponents out at the next election. The only difference is that in England or America the tired voter is given an opportunity to rest between elections, while in the country of the Caribbean a revolution has all seasons for its own, and yesterday's President, the beneficiary of a before-breakfast *coup d'état*, may to-morrow after luncheon be fleeing to a neighboring State or seeking asylum in a foreign legation.

Europe having left the political affairs of Latin-America to the United States, the United States has practically put a premium upon revolution. It has been the policy of the Washington Government—with such exceptions, of course, as special circumstances might require—to recognize a President *de facto* and to accept a President *de jure*, without inquiring too narrowly into the sufficiency of his title or the validity of his right to the office. The American Government has acted on the principle that an election was a domestic concern and outside the scope of foreign interference, and that when the people were satisfied—

or at least outwardly pretended to be satisfied—to accept a certain man as President it was not for the Government of the United States to declare the election fraudulent or void because of the disregard of legal forms. This policy, to repeat, was a premium put upon revolution. If revolution was attempted and succeeded, and its leader was able to proclaim himself President, his position was regularized and made secure by the recognition of the United States, and other nations followed the lead of the United States because it was supposed to be more immediately concerned in the preservation of order and the insurance of stability, and to have better means of ascertaining the facts. Having been accepted by the United States the usurper, the patriot, or the adventurer, and sometimes he was one or both or a mixture of all three, was by right accorded his seat in the council of nations, and had nothing more to fear until the next revolution.

Exactly a week after Mr. Wilson came into office, that is on March 11th, 1913, he gave the first indication of his policy toward Latin-America. In an official statement issued from the White House dealing with the relations between the United States and Latin-America this language was used:—

"One of the chief objects of my Administration will be to cultivate the friendship and deserve the confidence of our sister republics of Central and South America, and to promote in every proper and honorable way the interests which are common to the peoples of the two continents.

"I earnestly desire the most cordial understanding and co-operation between the peoples and leaders of America, and therefore deem it my duty to make this brief statement.

"Co-operation is possible only when supported at every turn by the orderly

processes of just government based upon law, not upon arbitrary or irregular forces. We hold, as I am sure all thoughtful leaders of republican government everywhere hold, that just government rests upon the consent of the governed, and that there can be no freedom without order based upon law and upon the public conscience and approval. . . .

"We shall lend our influence of every kind to the realization of these principles in fact and practice, knowing that disorder, personal intrigue, and defiance of constitutional rights weaken and discredit government, and injure none so much as the people who are unfortunate enough to have their common life and common affairs so tainted and disturbed. We can have no sympathy with those who seek to seize the power of government to advance their own personal interests or ambition.

"We are the friends of peace, but we know that there can be no lasting or stable peace in such circumstances. As friends, therefore, we shall prefer those who act in the interest of peace and honor, who protect private rights and respect the restraints of constitutional provision. Mutual respect seems to us the indispensable foundation of friendship between States as between individuals."

When this statement was issued conditions in Mexico foreshadowed American intervention. That had been the fear of Mr. Taft, but Mr. Taft had been able to unload Mexico upon his successor in the same way that Mr. Cleveland had devised Cuba to Mr. McKinley. Mr. Wilson, on March 11th last, was very much of an unknown quantity to Americans; public men had not then taken his measure, they knew nothing of his policies, almost as little of his methods, and they had not fathomed his temperament or his mental processes. There had been

neither occasion nor opportunity for the President to make known what policy he would pursue in regard to Mexico, but Americans who read between the lines of the statement saw there a pointed warning to Huerta, and a sharp admonition to the Zelayas and Castros of the revolution-ridden republics. In Central America the impression had gained lodgment that Mr. Wilson would reverse the policy and methods of his immediate predecessor and content himself with a policy of *laissez faire*. American marines were sent to Nicaragua by Mr. Taft to protect the lives and property of Americans, and this action had been criticized by Democrats. To them it was too "Imperialistic," it was dangerous, and a departure from a "traditional policy"; and tradition, it may be observed, is only to be respected when it is warranted to fortify one's own opinions or prejudices. The Democratic attitude was in harmony with their opposition to the ratification of the Nicaraguan and Honduran treaties whereby the United States assumed a financial protectorate over those republics. Knowing what Democrats had said and the position they had taken, it was perhaps not surprising that Central America should have read Mr. Wilson's pronouncement with calm indifference, accepting it as an academic generalization rather than a concrete policy.

Generalizations in politics, in international politics especially, are the shufflings of the timid rather than the wisdom of statesmanship founded on courage and sustained by purpose. Generalizations admit of so many interpretations, modifications, peculiar adaptations to the circumstance of the moment that they may be twisted to suit any purpose of cowardice or expediency. In politics, more especially when they have to do with a policy,

they are as effective as quaker guns. Mr. Wilson had reached the conclusion that the time had come for the United States to have a definite policy and adhere to it.

Mr. Wilson refused to recognize General Huerta as provisional President of Mexico for two reasons. First, because he was accused of complicity in the murder of President Madero, and a man who came to the Presidency, his hands stained with blood, was not a fit person to be invited to his seat at the council table of nations. Second, Huerta was President, not by right, but by force. He had no legal title to his office, he was not the free choice of the people, he could not even claim to have the support of a majority. In the interest of Mexico itself, in the interest not less of the whole world, Huerta could not be permitted to enjoy what he had obtained by fraud and force, and that notification to Huerta would be a warning to Mexico and all the other countries of Latin-America that the United States could no longer accept murder and revolution as recognized political methods, or tolerate anarchy and perpetual disorder as the legitimate expression of public sentiment. Hitherto it was regarded, not only as bad taste, but in violation of the well-established principles of international intercourse for a State, a strong State especially, to interfere in the domestic affairs of a neighbor. If Latin-American States choose to elect their Presidents by means of the bullet and the knife instead of the ballot and speeches, that might be distressing to a more refined civilization, but so long as foreigners and their property were not the victims of the contending factions, interference was not required. *Laissez faire* was the line of least resistance. The ways of Latin-America were not those of a people schooled in constitu-

tional government with a respect for the due observance of law, and it was folly to imagine that the habits and customs of centuries could be changed because they were offensive to the United States and Europe. The United States and Europe must make the best of a bad job and pray for a better day.

Mr. Wilson's declaration of principles has been severely criticized, not only by his own countrymen, but by Europeans less familiar with all the circumstances, and therefore more excusable, if criticism based on ignorance is ever excusable. Mr. Wilson was told that while theoretically his policy was magnificent, practically it was impossible. Idealism, it was pointed out to him, none too gently, has its place in the affairs of men, but not in statcraft. If Mr. Wilson, his critics said, adhered to his determination to have intercourse with no man whose hands were not free from blood, or who had come to power through the short cut of revolution, he would find few rulers of Latin-America who passed the test of his exalted standard. In a word, he had blundered because he was unfamiliar with conditions and without knowledge of the peculiarities—racial, political, and social—of the peoples whose regeneration he sought. He had used coercion where suasion would have been more effective. He had placed himself in a position where he could not retreat without loss of *prestige*, and failure on the part of Huerta to yield to the American demands would leave no alternative except the employment of force.

I shall not attempt to answer these criticisms because it does not seem necessary, but it is important to point out that whether Huerta retires in obedience to the American mandate or is driven out by American arms (and at the time I write no one knows

what the end will be) Mr. Wilson has formulated a new doctrine that will have lasting and beneficial results, and for which the world at large may be grateful. Whether we of Europe like the Monroe Doctrine or not, we are forced to recognize its existence and to take consideration of it in all our calculations. It is ridiculous for us to make mouths at it, to talk of "American arrogance," to pretend to ignore it, to try to dodge it. It is a fact. It exists. So long as the United States has the power to enforce it, it will remain. So long as Europe does not by force destroy it, it is there. That being the case Europe has much to gain by stability, by order, by courts beyond the control of the Executive, by peace, and respect for life and property; and nothing to gain by revolution and government by dictator. Individuals may see in misfortune their profit, as in the old days wreckers lured ships to destruction by displaying false lights so as to rob the dead and plunder the living, but civilization destroyed the profit of the ghouls for the advantage of society. Mr. Wilson has no sympathy for concessionaires who mix politics and trade, who upset a President and support with money and arms a rival so that they may obtain undue favors, who encourage revolution for their own pecuniary gains. Mr. Wilson does not oppose legitimate enterprise, nor does he encourage the repudiation of contracts or discrimination in favor of one nation to the detriment of others. He says, in substance: "Develop Latin-America because it needs to be developed, but it must not be exploited." The excuse for exploitation has been the risk, the uncertainty that money invested might be lost because the courts were venal, Executives dishonest, and Government a shadow without substance. Mr. Wilson says: "When there is law and

order, and revolution is one of the lost arts, the risk will have been removed, investments will be as safe in Latin-America as in English-America; enterprise, intelligence, and industry will earn their proper rewards, and there need be no fear of investments being destroyed by corrupt influences or political methods that civilization cannot countenance."

In his Mobile speech President Wilson clearly outlined his Latin-American policy. "States that are obliged," he said, "because their territory does not lie within the main field of modern enterprise and action, to grant concessions are in this condition—that foreign interests are apt to dominate their domestic affairs, a condition of affairs always dangerous and apt to become intolerable." Latin-America, he declared, was to see "an emancipation from subordination which has been inevitable to foreign enterprises," and in gaining that freedom it could rely upon the disinterested friendship of the United States, and one of the duties of friendship was to see "that from no quarter are material interests made superior to human liberty and national opportunity." Do not think, he warned, "that questions of the day are mere questions of policy and diplomacy. They are shot through with the principles of life. We dare not turn from this principle, that morality and not expediency is the thing that must guide us, and that we will never condone iniquity because it is most convenient to do so."

President Wilson has given a new interpretation to the Monroe Doctrine, was the general comment after the delivery of his speech. He made it plain, public men and the Press agreed, that even less to be tolerated than political control was financial mastership. The Monroe Doctrine recognized the dan-

ger of European political domination over the Americas, but modern conditions had made financial ownership a greater menace. The Monroe Doctrine was a warning to Europe not to attempt colonization, but it did not specifically set forth the duties and responsibilities of the United States. That omission President Wilson has supplied. The advantages conferred upon the United States by the Monroe Doctrine impose a moral obligation. It is the duty of the United States, not alone to protect the political entity of Latin-America, but also to preserve its financial independence; to save it from its own weakness; to prevent it becoming the victim of concessionaires whether they be American or European; to enable Latin-America to be developed without selling itself into bondage; to encourage Latin-America to respect itself so that it may have the respect of the world.

That, in substance, is President Wilson's foreign policy. It means a new era in Central America. It means that the principle laid down by Mr. Wilson that a revolution is not in itself sufficient to confer a valid title to a Presidency will discourage revolution, and that future American Presidents will be more cautious in recognizing rulers who have substituted force for constitutional methods. It means peace where now no peace prevails. It means, eventually, a contented and prosperous Latin-America in whose contentment and prosperity other nations will share. Mr. Wilson has placed the relations existing between Latin-America and the rest of the world on a different basis from those hitherto existing and more in harmony with the enlightened spirit of the age. He has taken a long step forward. Under his guidance civilization advances.

The Contemporary Review.

A. Maurice Lee.



## A POST-ROAD THROUGH THE SYRIAN DESERT.

BY GERTRUDE LOWTHIAN BELL.

## II.

The sun was high when we left our camp in the Murrah, for though we had got up and breakfasted while it was yet night, we were delayed by the prayers of the sheep-merchant, whose straying camel had not been recovered. He had offered £T1 as a reward, and his comrades alternated between optimistic assurances that no Arab could resist the allurements of so large a sum of ready money, and the blackest anticipations of the dangers to which derelict camels are exposed, accompanied by head-shakings over the dishonesty of mankind in general and of inhabitants of the wilderness in particular. From these divergent utterances I attempted to form some estimate of the length of time for which we might reasonably be expected to put off our departure; but when we had kicked our heels in camp for three hours hope flickered out in every breast, except that of the owner of the camel, or rather (aided by sentiments not purely altruistic), it changed into a sure conviction that he would undoubtedly recover his animal upon his return journey. I saw no reason for certainty on this head, but neither was there any logical ground for supposing that the camel, which might by now be half-way back to Damascus if its fancy had pointed in that direction, would return at the end of another three hours, or even of another three days; and hardening my heart against the plaintive eyes of the sheep-merchant, I gave the order to start. That he bore me no grudge did not help to satisfy me of the justice of my course.

In half an hour we crossed the rise that divides the Murrah from the Shahâmi. The 'Ard al-Shahâmi has

the shape of a shallow basin, at the bottom of which the rain-water collects in a large pool. Near to the pool there were six birkehs, open cisterns, which were obviously artificial. The soil had been dug out and piled into high banks, but the banks had been neglected for many a year; they had broken down in places and had allowed the water to escape, and the cisterns were in consequence all dry. During the next two days I saw several groups of these birkehs, all similarly ruined. 'Ali attributed them "to the first times"; but on the lips of an Arab that phrase has not much significance. I have ridden a day's journey through a sandy wilderness to see a ruin described to me in the same terms, and found it to be a mud-built enclosure not fifty years old. "Mistress," said my guide, when I expressed disappointment, "by Allah, before my beard was grown I saw it here." Neither do I believe the cisterns to be of great antiquity. The banks have no appearance of age. They are generally visible for many miles away, rough and white and unconcealed by the growth of grass or scrub. I never detected any sign of masonry, but the birkehs are often cut down into the rock, though not very deeply. They are always placed cunningly at the bottom of a hollow land, or below a long slope where they may catch the rain-water. In the next region, the 'Ard al-Luqtah, which we crossed in the afternoon, there was another group of cisterns, and these were all brim-full. The water-parting between the Shahâmi and the Luqtah is the western boundary of the Hamâd, the most dreaded part of the Syrian desert. The word Hamâd, like most of the names which were given

to me, is not to be found in the written language. The Arabs think that it means *flat*, but there is no etymological justification for their theory.<sup>1</sup> However this may be, flat the Hamâd is, uncompromisingly flat. The rare and shallow pools are dry before the grass grows up between the flint-like stones with which its surface is covered, and the Beduin never pitched their tents far beyond its frontiers. When we had passed the narrow belt of the Luqtah we came to the 'Ard Zerqa wa Kabûd, so called from two small bills which we saw far to the south, and an hour later we found a camping-ground near some tents of the Beni Khâlid. We had made a lamentably short stage, but the bereaved sheep-merchant begged me to go no further, in the hope that his camel might be restored to him, and I had not the heart to refuse his request. The shaikh of the Beni Khâlid paid his respects to us and presented me with a tiny lamb—the best, said he, that he could offer, since his flocks had been decimated by cold and disease. I sent him in return a silk kerchief, but when he was gone Muhammad grumbled loudly at the quality of his gift, saying that it would not provide one man with a full meal. "And who can tell," he added indignantly, scanning a cloudy horizon, "where is the qiblah?" In this last particular, however, I was able to oblige him; and having the assurance of the compass that he was facing to the south, he addressed himself to his prayers, and peace fell upon the camp.

Shaikh Muhammad, as I had discerned in the first hour of our acquaintance, was a voluble talker. His tongue never ceased from wagging in exhortation, rebuke, or anecdote, and

<sup>1</sup> Dozy, "Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes," gives "hammâdah—grand plateau rocailleux et stérile"; and there is an Arabic verb, "hamad," meaning to be barren, but this last is written with the less strongly aspirated h.

I learnt much of his history as our camels paced side by side. He had married three wives. One lived with her children at Damascus; another had lived and died at Kubelsah; and there was a third who lived at Baghdad, but her he had not seen for twenty-three years. "Face of Allah, oh, mistress," he cried, "she has grown old"; and he stroked his own white beard. "Moreover, she never bore but one daughter." The Damascus wife was sprung from the great Ruwalla stock of the 'Anazeh, and to his friendship with Ibn Soqtâm, the Ruwalla Shaikh, Muhammad owed the position he enjoyed in nomad and in urban society. He accompanied his patron to Constantinople when Ibn Soqtâm presented ten of the famous horses of the Ruwalla to 'Abd al-Hamid. They travelled in a German ship, and were given, when they reached the capital, an honorable reception. "We went up to the palace, and with us were thirty slaves. And the Sultan gave to Ibn Soqtâm £800 and to me £100, and we remained as his guests for eighty days. Oh, mistress, 'Abd al-Hamid was a man, but, may God be praised and exalted! it was well that he was deposed, for he neglected the soldiery and the government. But now the soldiers draw their pay and they are clothed like pashas." Every evening, when we came into camp, the Shaikh would instruct Fattûh and me where and how to pitch our tents—matters in which we were as wise as he. To hear him, it might have been of sovereign importance whether the plot of ground we should choose out of the whole wilderness lay a foot more to the north or a trifle farther east. One night, as he rolled away to his own hearth and the deluge of words was diverted towards the camel-drivers, I looked up from the making of my bed to Fattûh, who was driving in tent-pegs, and

said, "Oh, Fattûh, do you pity the wife in Baghdad?" Fattûh interrupted the swing of his mallet. "Ef-fendim," said he, "she is very much at rest." But for my part I should be sorry not to see Shaikh Muhammad for twenty-three years.

It was penetratingly cold when we set out before dawn. At sunrise we reached the pool of Khafiyeh, a shallow frozen marsh; and I found that we had taken but a slender supply of water from the fine pool of Shahâmi, and must replenish our store here. The empty water-skins (girbeh is their name in Arabic) were stiff with frost, and we were obliged to light a fire of trees and melt them carefully lest they should crack. Beneath the ice of the Khafiyeh pool there was little except mud, and this dense fluid we ladled into the girbehs with tin cups. Muhammad was serenely indifferent to delay. Whenever we halted, if it were only for a few minutes to allow the baggage-camels to overtake us, he bade Fattûh and 'Alî gather trees, and, turning his back on the wind which scours these high plains, he established himself with his narghileh before the blaze. "Al-Nawâfî?" he would say—"Mistress, know you how the Arabs call fire? Al-Nawâfî, the Profitable." (It is a good Arabic plural form, but not to be found in this sense in the dictionaries.) I have seen 'Alî thrust his chilled feet and hands into the bonfire, while the gusty flames licked up through the cotton shirt that hung in rags about his shanks. He was poorly clad in two thin woollen cloaks over the shirt. "Have you no sheepskin?" said I, as I felt the wind pierce through my fur jacket. "It was taken from me by raiders," he replied,—"Arabs from the south who were strange to me, for all the tribes here I know. They took from me food and sheepskin, but not the post-bags, nor yet the dulûl—no raider would

take the dulûl of the messenger, for he must surely starve and die. Since then I have had no money to buy another sheepskin." "My bakhshish will buy it," I suggested. "Please God," he answered. It is the courteous negative, and I subsequently found that the moneys which he should earn on this journey were already mortgaged on 'Alî's imagination. His thoughts were fixed upon a new bride, one of the fair maidens of Kubeisah whom he had long coveted.

We rode for several hours across a wilderness of flints, with the frosty wind in our faces and a leaden sky overhead. "It is snow at Diyârbekr," 'Alî observed, and he was right. In northern Mesopotamia the snow lay for six weeks. All living things died, flocks and gazelles and birds; I saw their corpses heaped up in the desert when I crossed it in May. Far to the north of us lay a long low hill, Jebel al-Ghurâb, the Mount of Crows; and to the south there was a bit of broken ground with two volcanic cones rising out of it, Tinf and Tuneif, the Knoll and the Little Knoll. We crossed two broad and shallow rain-ways, the Khawâr of Tuneif (khôr is one of the many words used for these wide bottoms), and since these khôrs of the 'Ard al-Tuneifât drain N.E. to the Euphrates, I suppose that somewhere near Khafiyeh we must have passed beyond the Syrian watershed. We camped in a vast flat expanse, where there was good ghûthâ for our fires. In all the Hamâd there is very little pasturage for camels, no shih nor any of the thorns they like; but at night 'Abdullah gave to each a ball of 'ajin, a dough kneaded of husks and coarse flour.

Again, upon the following day, the "*busera infernal che mai non resta*" drove in our teeth. It was so cold that, when the light came, I got down from my camel and ran for close upon

an hour. The sky was livid with un-fallen snow, the sun never shone upon us, and the dusky levels were un-broken save by an insignificant hill to the north, *Jebel Sha'lan*. The earth was barren even of thorns. We passed by *Muwall*, a stretch of frozen mud, where 'Abdullah made shift to fill a water-skin for the evening's 'aj'n, and by two small dry *birkehs*, the second lying half-way up the long gentle slope which ends the inhospitable *Hamâd*. No sooner had we passed that frontier than the character of the desert changed, the ground became sandier and less stony, and the surface rose and fell in softly swelling lines which looked like the curves of a live body.

While we were yet far off we saw the white banks of the *Khuwaim birkehs*, to which we had occasion to ride, all unwillingly, for the mare broke loose, and it took half a dozen of us to round her up as she nibbled the withered grass which grew upon the floor of the cisterns. We crossed the wide *Wâdi al-Walij*, which is said to rise not far from the *jôf* of *Nejd* and to fall into the *Wâdi al-Miyâ*, and so into the *Euphrates*; but, if my information is correct, we never crossed the *Wâdi al-Miyâ*, though I saw the *Jebel al-Miyâ* to the north. To the south 'Ali pointed out a low rise which he said marked the *Khabra Slubbiyyeh*, with old *berkehs*. A *khabra* is a place too shallow to be called a pool, where water collects and stagnates until it dries.

Not far from the *Wâdi al-Walij* the ground was strewn with whitened bones. 'Ali drew his camel aside and quartered this field of ancient suffering.

"A great caravan perished here," he observed when he returned to us.

"Lo, we belong to God," said I, in the customary phrase. "When did it happen?"

"A long time ago," he answered,

in winter. We have heard the tale."

We came into camp in the *Wâdi Swâb* among abundance of trees, but our water store was running low, and the Shaikh added a new admonition to his evening counsels: "Mistress! no washing to-night." Over the coffee he and 'Ali and I spent some time in consultation. Our true course lay due east to the wells of *Ga'rah*, but 'Ali feared that we should not reach them in a day's march, and it was certain that our water-supply was not sufficient for another night: he proposed therefore to take us to a *khabra* of which he had knowledge, and thence straight to the *Wâdi Haurân*. I agreed reluctantly. In summer, when all the surface pools are dry, the *Ga'rah* wells are the first watering-place after you leave *Dumair*, and I wished to see the spot of which I had so often heard; but the Shaikh seemed to favor 'Ali's plan, and I had no sufficient reason for opposing it. Next morning, however, when 'Ali struck out nearly S.E., Muhammad was greatly perturbed. In the low-lying pastures of the *jôf* of *Ga'rah* (a *jôf* is a wide depression, much prized for winter pasturage) he would have found tribes whom he knew, but he feared that by going south we might fall into the arms of alien forays coming up from *Nejd*. "Oh, Father of Zaid," said 'Ali,—the Shaikh, like all parents of sons, was usually addressed as the father of his eldest born,—"the time of raiders is not yet; it is too cold. And we rely upon God." "Life of Allah! what is this talk?" cried Muhammad. "The command is to God; we are in the *Shâmiyyeh* where no one is safe, face of Allah!" So for an hour or two, spurred by the Shaikh's anxieties, we kept a sharp watch for foes, and it was well that we had this matter to occupy our minds, for after we had crossed the *Wâdi Suwaib al-Tawil*, a tributary of

the Swāb, the 'Ard al-Herri, through which we were riding, was as flat as a board. When the sun had gathered strength the horizon was decorated with a fantastic mirage, which greatly added to the enjoyment of looking for raiding parties. Stones lying half a mile away would rise and swell till they looked like men and camels, and 'Ali himself was deceived into seeing an encampment of the Slubbah, with their renowned white donkeys tethered by the tents, which as we drew near faded, tents, men, and donkeys, into the quivering air. When in the afternoon we reached the Khabra al-Mulussa, it was long before I could believe it was real.<sup>2</sup>

A khabra, almost dry, as was that of Mulussa, will provide you with a beverage as muddy and as musty as the imagination can picture. Taught by the Beduin, we were accustomed to employ for the clarifying of rain-water a white chalk-like stone, which when powdered and thrown into the water-bucket will precipitate the mud; but with the oily liquid of Mulussa the chalk was powerless, and the use of it served no purpose but to increase the solid elements in our cooking-pots. A frosty hurricane drove down upon us in the night, and Muhammad found a thousand excuses for keeping to his tent—'Ali's scanty clothing, a colic produced by the muddy water, any reason served

<sup>2</sup> From the Khabra al-Mulussa the Wadi al-Mulussa must take its source. It runs N. into the low Ga'rah country, and a small hill which I saw to the N., 'Anz al-Mulussa, was said to stand upon its lip. In the valley are situated the wells of Mulussa, Biyar al-Mulussa, three metres in depth. 'Ali reckoned them to be five hours north of our camp. Two hours to the east of them is the well of Ghurri; and the wells of Ga'rah, 10 to 12 metres deep are 2½ hours farther north. I could not verify any of this information, but I suppose that the Ga'rah wells must be Kiepert's "Brunnen 12 metre tief." The low jof of Ga'rah is very large as much as two days' journey from east to west; and its permanent wells are fed by the drainage of the whole basin. Whether any of its waters fall out to the north into the tributaries of the great Wadi Hauran, and so into the Euphrates, I do not know, but from the map they would appear to do so.

while the Nawāfi' burned. When the merchants and I were ready to start, he was still puffing his narghleh, and in despair I pulled out the tent-pegs and brought his roof about his ears. A scene of loud confusion followed, the Shaikh's voice, calling upon the Prophet to help him search for the tent-pegs, vying with the blasts of the storm; but before sunrise we were off.

"Mistress," he shouted, when his white dulūl came abreast of me, "to-day we are enemies."

"God forbid!" said I.

"God prolong your existence," he retorted, "but we are enemies. In the desert there is no forgiveness for him who pulls down a man's tent—no, not the gift of a mare shall atone for it."

But the Shaikh's anger burnt out as quickly as our brushwood fires, and the pressure of public opinion was against him, notwithstanding the breach of good manners of which I had been guilty.

We dropped almost immediately about 200 feet, by sandy slopes and crests of volcanic rock, into broken ground, the southern limit of the Ga'rah jōf. Here we came presently to a stone heap hung with fluttering rags and surrounded by graves. Among the stones purple bulbocodium was flowering. It was a desert turbeh, a burial-place sanctified by the bones of some holy man, and, as I looked, I realized that we had passed no other cemetery in all our way.

"Oh, 'Ali," I said, "where do the Arabs lay their dead? for these are the first graves that we have seen."

He answered: "As for this turbeh, it is from the beginning; but with us where a man dies, there is he buried. The Arabs raise no heap of earth above him, nor put any stone to mark the place."

I rode on considering this nirvana, life born of the waste and ab-



sorbed into the waste, leaving no memorial of its passage. Muhiyy al-Din drew up to me.

"Effendim," said he, as though he dissented from my secret musings; "death is not fair. Shall we live again? What say you in the lands of the west?"

I answered: "Tell me what is life? the bodies of these Arabs feed the green herbs of spring."

He pondered for a while and said at last: "Is that your thought, or have you taken it from others?"

At midday we made a short halt, crouching in the dry rain-channel of the Wādī al-Gharri for shelter from the furious wind; and there one of the baggage camels bore a foal, which was killed and subsequently eaten by 'Abdullah and his men. It would have perished in the bitter cold. We marched all day a little to the south of east, north of the Jebel al-Dahl' and across nameless valleys, all running down to the jōf of Ga'rah—towards Jebel al-Afaif, said 'All, a hill which must therefore be wrongly placed by Kiepert; I never caught sight of it. Two hours south of our path there is good water at al-Mât, whither 'All would gladly have gone, but I refused, saying that we were already too far to the south. "What do you know of the desert?" he returned indignantly. "You have never before crossed the Shâmiyyeh." "Mistress," the Shaikh put in his word, "we have known this desert all our lives; will you guide us?" But I held firm, and in the end I was justified. Six hours to the south of al-Mât, 'All had seen a burial-place where all the grave-stones stood upright; in the centre there was a walled enclosure wherein was a large grave, larger than the graves of men; and the tall tombstone upon it was inscribed, but not in Arabic letters—a curious piece of information, if it is to be trusted. We

camped in a hailstorm in the bottom of the deep valley of 'Ajarmiyeh.

But we were to feel the sharpest nip of the frost no more, for we were now upon the downward slope towards Euphrates. The breath of the Mesopotamian spring greeted us at dawn, the sun gained his first decisive victory as we marched down into the jōf, and the old Shaikh burst into the songs which he had learnt from the Beduin of Nejd. We crossed the western limit of the Ga'rah, and found ourselves among rain-ways which drain into the Sha'ib Haurân, the Ravine of Haurân. 'All declared that we were now but seven or eight hours from that mighty father of all the valleys in the Eastern desert, which we intended to strike at the point where the clear springs of Muhaiwir rise in its bed. We followed for some time the Wādī al-'Ud, and left it only when it turned south-east to join the Haurân through a deep cleft. Our way led considerably north of east over innumerable small ridges and shallow basins. Two hours after noon I asked 'All whether the Haurân was yet two hours away. "More," he replied. "Is it three hours?" I enquired. "More," he answered. "Is it four?" said I with a slight sinking of heart,—four hours would bring us well into the night. "Wallah, not so much." We rode on till five, when it was manifest that our guide had lost his way. He climbed on to a ridge to take his bearings, and the Shaikh seized the opportunity to smoke a narghileh. But Fattâh and I had him into the saddle again, and we rode on firmly till the dark closed down upon us. We would then have camped, though we had no water save for a cupful in the bottom of my flask; but the Father of Camels protested that he had nothing for the mixing of the camels' meal, and reluctantly we moved on for an-

other hour. It was a starless night, and there could be no wisdom in following through the darkness a guide who had lost his way by day. Muhîyy al-Dîn was of the same opinion. He crept up to me and whispered, "Ef-fendim, here are we travelling in the night, and by no known road, and if we meet raiders they will not see that we are merchants and a messenger, but take us for a foe and shoot at us. Let us camp."

"Shall we be safer in camp?" said I.

"Wallah, yes," he replied; "for, seeing our fires, they would send up a scout to listen, and he, when he heard our speech, would know that we were Syrians and an 'Agaill, and they would pass us by."

I submitted this view to the others, and it met with universal approval. So we halted, and in a few moments Fattûh had pitched my tent and I had found my bed among the camel loads: as for the men, they drew their camels into a circle and slept under the lee of them. We made a cup of tea and shared it with Muhammad; but in truth no one was thirsty except my mare, who whinnied a protest to every shadowy figure that drew near to her. As I fell asleep I heard Fattûh reasoning with her.

"There is no water," he was saying. "There is none, Mâ fi."

Not even Muhammad was anxious to delay departure, and we set out while it was still gray and heavy night. A faint reddening of the eastern cloud-banks told us of the sunrise; the Shaikh pulled himself together and began to sing—

"Mâ yuthrî'l 'inna, wa lâ yuthrî'l  
bait—"

The camel-riders crowded round him, laughing.

"Sing it again, oh Father of Zaid," said I, "that I may hear."

Muhammad began the song afresh—

"What profits the hearth glow, what  
profits the tent,  
And what profits heaped raiment to  
one who's a-cold?"

What profit save to clasp her, living  
or life spent;

I have her ardent flank for fire and  
for fold."

"Aferin! well done!" shouted his hearers.

"Who made it?" I asked. There was swing and fire in the wild quatrain, for all the rudeness of the metre.

"It was made by Muhammad 'Abdullah, Ibn al-Rashîd, Emîr of Nêjd," he replied, not without satisfaction at the aptness of his memory. "From the Shammâr I learnt it."

But Fattûh listened with severe disapproval.

"My lady," said he, "how can you give ear to such singing? In Aleppo we would not suffer it."

The decorum of the Christian East clashed sharply against the reckless hedonism of pagan Arabia,—pagan to this day, with the name of God upon its lips.

Our troubles were over, but it was six hours before we dropped down into the Sha'ib and an hour more before we reached Muhaiwir, and then it was not I but the Shaikh who pointed out to 'Alî that we had indeed "southerned" too much. The camels of the Sbâ', a division of the 'Anazeh, pastured over the levels bordering the ravine, and numerous small encampments were pitched along the valley. As we descended by a side gorge I noticed a ruin, the foundations of an oval tower built of dressed stones, the first sign that we had struck the mediæval road. A torrent must have flowed recently down the ghadîr, for all the plants growing in its bed were uprooted or bent, and covered with mud; it had left big pools behind it, at the first of which we stopped to water our animals. At Muhaiwir the

Wādī Haurān is about 200 feet deep, and a good mile wide. It is a noble valley, with steep rocky sides, broken by tributary gorges. I have crossed its mouth south of Alūs, a village on the Euphrates, and I should like to follow it to its source, for, if any vestiges of the first times remain in the eastern Shāmiyyeh, it must be here that they are to be found. I have heard talk of ruins, but they are described vaguely as vineyard walls and sheepfolds; only at Muhaiwir is there a qasr, a fort. It lies under an outcrop of volcanic rock which juts into the ghādir and holds at its base a perennial spring. The qasr, like the oval tower, is built of roughly dressed stones. The walls stand in part, and three voussoirs of the gateway arch are still in place. The plan is a hollow square with chambers round three sides of the interior court. That it is mediæval I do not doubt, nor yet that it marks the mediæval road. Of this road 'Ali gave me the following account. A well-defined track, with the stones cleared away from it and heaped on either side, runs from Palmyra to the wells of Ga'rah. It passes by the ruins of three forts, one at Buharra, a second in the Wādī al-Miyā, and a third, Ju'aldeh, in the Wādī Swāb. The two last resemble the buildings at Muhaiwir, 'Amej, and Khubbāz, but Buharra belongs to Rām, like Palmyra. The last part of this statement is correct,—there are Roman remains at Buharra. Each of these forts is a day's journey from the other, said 'Ali; but this cannot be true—some of the distances must be greater. From Ga'rah the road continues due east; it crosses the Haurān at Muhaiwir and passes by 'Amej and Khubbāz to Kubeisah and Hit. This road from Palmyra to Hit was called by 'Ali the *Derb Zubaideh*, the road of Zubaideh, but the name I conjecture to be a recent invention, a carry-

ing over of the tradition which ascribes the pilgrim road from Baghdad to Meccah to Queen Zubaideh, wife of Harūn al-Rashid. This guess was borne out by 'Ali's remark that it was within the last fifty or sixty years that the traces of the road from Hit to Ga'rah had been observed. "Before that time the Messenger found his way by the stars, but now we are guided always by the stone-heaps along the *Derb Zubaideh*." I conclude that the mediæval post-road from Baghdad to Damascus followed the line of the present high-road from Baghdad to Hit, turned west across the desert to Ga'rah, but from there, avoiding the waterless Hamād, pursued a north-westerly direction to the Palmyrene oases. From Palmyra it either took advantage of the old Roman stations, which are used by the modern caravan road, or it ran south of the *Jebel al-Sharqi* to Dumair, a line along which there are ruined khāns. It still remains to account for the cisterns of the Hamād, since it may be taken for granted that they were not dug by Beduin; and here, too, a possible clue was supplied by 'Ali. He said that until eighty years ago the old camel post-road across the Syrian desert had fallen into entire disuse (even the course of the mediæval track had, as he had observed, been forgotten), but at that time the English and the Turkish Governments re-established direct communication and bore together the expenses of the post. This is substantially true. According to correspondence and memoranda which the India Office allowed me to consult, the Consul-General at Damascus and Colonel Taylor at Baghdad established in 1830, with the sanction of the East India Company, a dromedary post between the two cities. The desert journey was performed in eight days, and the yearly cost was £500. After the

expedition to Cabul in 1842 the post was abolished for motives of economy; but in 1844 Rawlinson was allowed to reopen a reduced service at an annual cost of £130. I hazard the suggestion that the birkehs may have been dug in 1830, when the East India Company established an expensive dromedary post, and that they fell immediately into disrepair since the post was abandoned in 1842 and never re-instituted on the same scale. 'All gave me some further information which I have no means of controlling. From Ga'rah two roads run to the south—one to Jerusalem, the other to Medinah. Upon these there are no forts, though there are a few old and ruined birkehs. From Ga'rah there is also a direct road to Shethâthâ, which is used by the sheep-merchants. It passes by al-Mât and Wizeh, a permanent spring of which I have often heard. And this was all he knew, wallah.

We camped at Muhaiwir, rejoicing for the first time in a hot sun and clean water. The camel-drivers washed and refilled the water-skins, the Shaikh smoked his narghileh, and I planned a little fort and examined a turbeh behind our tents, in which, however, I found neither cut stones nor any other sign by which it might be dated. As I strolled back through the warm sand Muhammad called to me—

"Mistress, honor us."

I sat down by the hearth, and 'All, who was coffee-maker in ordinary, passed me the cup.

"God bless your hand!" said I.

"A double health!" he responded.

"Upon your heart!" I returned in the correct formula.

The old Shaikh took the stem of his narghileh from his lips, and eyeing me critically, observed—

"Where is your face here and where your face in Damascus! You

are black as a woman of the 'Anazeh."

And, indeed, wind and frost and sun, though they may be strengthening to the spirit, are of no profit to the complexion.

The evening was magically still. Through the soft dusk came the trample of little feet, the tinkling of goat-bells, and the guttural cries of the neatherds watering their flocks at the spring. They sold us milk, with which Fattûh prepared a rice-pudding, of unromantic but delicious memory.

The waning moon, as near its end as was our journey, rode high on the shoulder of the Scorpion as we climbed the steep bank of the Wâdi Haurân next day. Muhlyy al-Dîn and I, cheered by warmth and rice-pudding, talked gaily together, but the Shaikh hastened to quell us.

"Talk before dawn is not good," said he, seeing within the shadow of every rock a sleeping foe. Reckless courage was not Shaikh Muhammad's leading characteristic.

After sunrise we crossed the Wâdi Mu'aishir, a tributary of the Haurân, and saw before us the ancient road running straight eastward, with its bank of stones on either side. From here to Khubbâz we seldom lost it, and I fancy that some misunderstanding of these wayside stone-heaps and of the modern name of the road must be the origin of a shadowy rectangular object marked in Kiepert's map as *Mauer der Zubeide*. Exactly half-way between the top of the Wâdi Haurân and the ruined fort of 'Amej is the Rijm al-Sabûn (wrongly placed by Kiepert), a pile of big stones visible in that flat land for a great distance, and perhaps mediæval, since it stands upon the mediæval road. Beyond it a long stretch of the old track was very clearly marked. The stones which had been removed from its surface were piled in heaps about three metres apart. Sand-grouse strutted and flitted

across our path (the only wild creatures we had seen, except for five gazelles near Mulussa, and a pair of ravens in the Ga'rah), and Fattûh, with great pomp, served up for my supper one which had fallen victim to his gun. After a prolonged diet of tinned meats it seemed most savory.

"Oh, Fattûh," said I, "this qata' is very good."

"May God conquer his women!" replied Fattûh. "How we labored with him! He would not cook."

"He has turned out very well," said I.

"A double health!" he returned. "May God destroy his dwelling."

We reached 'Amej at dawn on the following day, and in a strong cold wind I planned the fort. It is precisely the same as the qasr of Khubbâz, but whereas Khubbâz stands almost intact, 'Amej is ruined down to the foundations, only the gate being preserved. To the west lay a tank, 36 by 30 metres, walled round partly with brick and partly with stone; but it was dry and filled with sand. As I worked, a solitary camel-driver came in sight, the outgoing Messenger from Baghdad, and Fattûh galloped up to him to get news of our caravan. But he had passed through Hit in the night, and could give us no tidings.

East of 'Amej there is an extensive khabra—the fact that the rain-water collects and lies here no doubt determined the position of the fort. It, too, was almost dry, although, said 'Ali, "the pools were full when I wintered." Over the marshy ground the huge crinkled leaves of a plant which the Arabs call *Ibn al-Himâr*, Son of the Wild Ass, were beginning to unfold. They grow to a size larger than rhubarb leaves, an evil-looking vegetation, though sheep will browse on it. The tents and flocks of the Dulaim filled the plain, and the sheep-merchants got news of their shaikhs

and dropped off one by one to join them. Muhammad hailed every shepherd-boy and asked him where they watered, where his shaikh was encamped, and to what pasturage the flocks of Kubelsah had been sent out. The boys answered him by name, for he was in his own country. And we, too, as we drew near the qasr of Khubbâz, were enlivened by the sight of familiar landmarks, the hills and ridges upon which I had gazed longingly two years before, and now greeted with the sense of having penetrated the land that had lain mysterious behind them. We pitched our tents in our old camping-ground by the edge of the ruined cistern below the fort.

As we drew near the frontiers of the desert we met the anxieties which we had left behind us at Damascus. What of the caravan? Had our baggage animals won through the Palmyrene snowdrifts? and if we did not find the muleteers at Hit, where should we seek for them? A splash of rain on my tent roof woke me and recalled me to these fears. We were not more than ten hours from Hit, and, the unfavorable weather notwithstanding, I told the Shaikh that I must refuse his repeated invitations to spend the night at Kubelsah and push on to my goal. "There is no permission," he protested, and Fate seemed to be of his opinion. Before we reached 'Ain Za'zu', the sulphur-spring that lies an hour from Kubelsah, the rain fell heavily. Rain in the desert calls a halt to travellers. In all parts the spongy surface turns at once to mud, but nowhere more decisively than in the sulphurous regions near Hit. The sabk-hah, so the Arabs term the reaches of crumbling earth that lie about pitchwells and sulphur-springs, needs no more than a shower to change into swamp, and very little mud will stop a camel. Before long I was aware of



a mighty downfall, and found myself and my hajin prostrate in the sticky paste of the Sabkhah; the west wind rose, mercilessly rain-laden, and we had much ado to struggle into Kubaisah. Two years earlier the palm-trees of the oasis had been a sea of green; now they bowed, brown and seared, before the storm.

"Oh, Father of Zaid," I cried, "look at the palm-trees!"

"There is no God but God," said he. "It is the snow that has done this."

Not an oasis north of Babylon was spared that winter.

When we reached the gates of the village 'Abdullah announced that his tired and hungry beasts could go no further through the mud, and Fattûh agreed that he spoke truth. We dismounted and followed Muhammad through the narrow streets, where the inhabitants ran out to greet him with "Ahlan! Ahlan!—welcome!" and a kiss on either cheek. A crowd of elders climbed with us up the broken stair to his guest-chamber, and the circle grew round the bonfire of scrub which had been lighted in the middle of the room, till not a foot of the floor was unoccupied.

"Here you shall sleep," said the Shaikh, peering through an atmosphere charged with wood and tobacco smoke. "I told you, wallah, that there was no permission to travel further."

I drew Fattûh aside. The rain had stopped, and from the balcony we saw the smoke of the pitch-furnaces that burn round Hit.

"It will be a night of discomfort," said I, looking towards those cloudy pillars.

Fattûh followed my gaze. "Upon my head and eyes," he answered, and disappeared down the stair, while I rejoined the company, praying that he might find some means of escape. But my thoughts were journeying along the road to Hit.

"Have you heard news of my caravan?" I asked the man who sat next to me.

"There was a caravan belonging to a Christian woman at Hit last week," he replied, "but it has marched."

"I was at Hit yesterday," said another. "There was no caravan of Aleppines, no wallah!"

An hour later Fattûh stood in the doorway.

"Muhammad," said he, "with your leave."

"Have you mounts?" inquired the Shaikh.

"Two camels for the loads," he answered, "and the lady has the mare, and I a donkey." Muhammad accepted the situation.

"God guide you," said he. "My daughter, go in the peace of God."

I bade him an affectionate farewell, and with the beautiful but lawless women of Kubaisah hanging on my skirts ("They are without shame," muttered Fattûh), rode out of the village. At the gate two fresh camels, in charge of a boy, stood loaded with our diminished packs; I shook off the women and we turned our faces towards Hit, racing the night and the storm that gathered behind us. Fattûh's donkey was so small that his legs touched the ground, and so weak that it could scarcely have made the four hours' march into Hit unburdened. I was no better off, for the mare had a sore heel and stumbled through the mud. We returned the donkey and Fattûh climbed on to one of the camels, but I walked, leading the mare; I had had enough of camel-riding in the sabkhah. The boy was perched upon the other load, a wild figure. His long black locks were bound by a white kerchief; sheepskin and cotton shirt fell open on his sun-burnt breast, and his raucous voice shouted tales of desert traffic to me, trudging in the mud.

"What is your name, oh boy?" I asked.

"Mejwed is my name, Mejwed, God save you! I travel to Nejd for sheep."

"Yes?" said I.

"God make it yes upon you, mistress; God send you in safety to your own people. Look you, I buy the sheep for two mejdehs in Hayyil and sell them for six in Jerusalem. But the expenses eat up one of the mejdehs. You know the desert?"

"Yes," said I, and drew upon myself the inevitable benediction.

"God make it yes upon you!" he shouted. "Food is dear in Nejd. Know you, if we were three men, a mejdeh would not suffice us for two days. No bread there is in Hayyil, no bread, no flour; you must eat dates. But we men of Kubaisah," he shook the elflocks out of his eyes, "we go where we will. We are friends with all the Beduin—God be exalted! Ibn Sha'lân, the Shammar, all of them."

Blackwood's Magazine.

Dusk fell, and the rain with it, and our talk was only of the road. Down came the camels in the glutinous sabbah and the path ran into sulphur pools and disappeared. It seemed not improbable that we should share its fate.

But our adventure was to have more prosperous an ending. In rain and darkness, wading through the pools and plunging through the mud, we three travellers, Fattûh, the mare, and I, came into Hit, wet and weary, looking, I make no doubt, like so many vagabonds.

The innkeeper of Hit is an old friend.

"'Abûd!" shouted Fattûh, when we drew near the twinkling lights of the khân, "yâ, 'Abûd! our caravan? is our caravan here?"

Through the night a voice rang out in answer—

"Welcome and kinship, and may the earth be wide to you. Your caravan is here."

## THE PROMISE OF ARDEN.

### CHAPTER XI.

My sister Octavia waited for me at Berkshire Gardens in the morning room. The car was to start at twelve; I had suggested that Octavia and her husband might wish to arrive at Eton earlier, so as to be in time for speeches, but of speeches Robert would not hear a word. Neither in nor out of the law courts would he hear a speech on a summer day if he could help it, and so it was arranged that we should arrive in time for luncheon at the White Hart; then we were to spend the rest of the day in the usual way, and come back after seeing the procession of boats. Octavia wanted to stay for the fireworks, but there Robert objected. He had too much work to do; he had

to be in court early the next morning. He would be back to dinner, he said; and dinner was arranged for half-past eight. As for me, I was to dine with the editor of the *Quadrant*.

"And now here's a complication," said Octavia to me. "Here's a cousin of Robert's—well, a sort of distant cousin—has telegraphed wanting to join our party, and as we couldn't very well refuse, that makes four instead of three."

"Oh, bother!" I said. "Why couldn't he go by himself?"

"It isn't he," said Octavia. "It's she."

"Then that's worse," I said. "I shall have to talk. And I don't want to say a word."

"Oh, but you will. You'll like her. Besides, she's engaged to be married," she added, a little inconsequently. Octavia is always absurdly interested in those about to marry.

"But that's the worst kind of all," I objected. "They won't even listen."

"You must make her," said Octavia. "Be really nice to her. Show her all the things. I shan't mind being left. She'll be so pleased to have someone to talk to who really knows the place."

"Why can't she bring whoever it is with her? Then we shouldn't be bothered."

"You're not being a bit kind or reasonable," said Octavia. "The poor man's in Egypt, or India, or somewhere, and she won't see him for years. Now will you be polite and pleasant? She'll be here in a moment."

"Well, I must try. But you did promise you wouldn't have a party," I grumbled.

"I know," agreed Octavia, with distracting equanimity.

And then the door opened, and the butler announced Miss Grey. Octavia shook hands with her, and turned to introduce me.

"You haven't met my brother, I think," she said.

"Well!" said Miss Grey, and could say no more. Her eyes were very wide open.

"I'm sorry I can't come to lunch with you at Parson's Hanger," I said.

"Then you've met before?" asked Octavia.

"But I'd no idea!" she said, looking from me to Octavia.

"Then you've often met before?" surmised Octavia.

"But—but— Oh dear! how dreadful you must think me," wailed Miss Grey. "I didn't—I really hadn't an idea, you know," she protested. "It—it always happens to me like this."

"If you don't one of you explain soon, I shall just have to call Robert," said Octavia.

"Miss Grey and I met on Saturday at a garden party," I began. "Down at Arden St. Mary, near where the Sargesson children live. And we were talking about the Fourth of June, and—and Miss Grey, I think, told me she was going, but——"

Miss Grey shook her head. "It's no good making excuses for me," she said. "It never is. Octavia knows." Octavia laughed. "Well, how it happened was like this, you see," she went on. "Mr. Markwick said he was going to take his sister down to Eton. And—well, if he hadn't started me thinking about it, I shouldn't have done anything but just gone home and stayed there. But he did start me thinking about things, and about last year and—and everything. And suddenly I wanted to be there again so much that I simply couldn't bear it any more, so I thought of you—but I'd no idea he was your brother—that you were his sister—and I telegraphed up at once reply-paid, and when your telegram came back the first thing this morning, I—well, I just bolted, you know."

"Bolted?"

"I had to. You see, the train was before ten. And I couldn't have breakfast with Roderick in these clothes, or he'd have known. And he'd never have let me go. He'd have locked the door. You can't do anything with Roderick. So I drove out early, straight from the stables so as not to bring the carriage round, and—and here I am, you see."

Octavia contemplated her. "I don't know if you were ever at school," she observed. "But if you were I don't believe you ever got punished."

Miss Grey smiled; I think she had been at school. "But I still can't understand," she began. "How is it I didn't know before? I mean, why

didn't I meet you last year, at dances and things?"

"Keith at a dance!" laughed Octavia. "The very last place! Why, he never goes anywhere."

"H'm! And of course I was only in London last year, was I? I see. I see." What she saw just at that moment was her own reflection in a full-length mirror on the wall. She seemed, on the whole, satisfied with the inspection.

"Dacia always did find a looking-glass before the rest of the furniture," came in a deep voice from the doorway behind us. My brother-in-law entered, and stood regarding her from what seemed to me about the level of the top of the door. My brother-in-law, I have heard Octavia tell him, owes his practice to his size. He has also an engaging smile. "I remember you found that one last year," he observed.

"I remember you looked at me in it," said Miss Grey calmly, extending a white-gloved hand. "How do you do, Cousin Robert? Do I call you cousin? I forget. It's more respectful, isn't it? Besides, I'm a very distant cousin, of course."

"I seem to recollect somebody getting into trouble because she wasn't quite distant enough."

"Now be quiet, both of you! I won't have it," said Octavia.

We waited in the hall while Robert gave the chauffeur his directions, and Octavia made some final arrangement about dinner. Miss Grey found another looking-glass in which she surveyed various effects, angles and positions with a slightly closer attention. Suddenly she caught my eye in the glass. She did not move, but stood there smiling.

"I say, had you thought?"

"I don't think so," I said.

"I'm Dacia."

She touched a hat-riband and laughed.

"If I'm your sister's cousin, you must be my cousin, and so—and so, you see——"

"You're Dacia."

Octavia came from the dining-room into the hall. She has a comprehensive eye. Robert waited for us at the door of the car.

"Let me see," he said. "You said you liked sitting outside best, didn't you?"

I had said so.

"Then that's right. We three will go inside; there'll be just room if Octavia doesn't mind sitting back." Octavia laughed. "Well, my dear," he said, "you know it's uncomfortable for everybody if I sit on that small seat."

"It is," assented Octavia.

And so we drove to Windsor. Once, when we slowed up in the traffic, Octavia leant over the wind-screen. "We want to know if you really like being outside," she said; but it was not Octavia who had suggested that question. Nor was it the only question in my mind. For I was thinking of two things: one, that she who had laughed at me in the glass was Dacia—Dacia by the name of her own choosing; and the other, that the guest described to me by Octavia was engaged to be married.

Well, I could find out what that meant in the afternoon. I got no nearer to an answer at luncheon, though I think she knew I was puzzling; perhaps she guessed at what Octavia had told me. Once, when Robert was occupied with an argument with Octavia, as to the place at which the car should wait for us, she glanced across at me and for a moment her eyes were serious; she was considering something, and I think had not made up her mind when Robert spoke to her and she turned her head again. But her chief anxiety seemed to be to get luncheon over. She wanted to

be out in the sunshine, among the people, in the movement and centre of things; she wanted to be walking again and laughing again in the surroundings she remembered: new dresses, new faces—and faces she had seen before? I wondered.

We stood in the hall after luncheon and waited for Robert, who had met a future constituent. (Robert is politically ambitious.) Dacia looked at the sunshine and then at me.

"Are you going to walk a little way with me?" she asked.

"I'm going to walk all the way and show you everything," I said. "Octavia told me to."

"You go on," nodded Octavia. "We'll follow when Robert's quiet again."

And Dacia was out in the sunshine. Robert was evidently still discussing the Bill when we turned the corner by the castle.

"Do you like my hat?" asked Dacia.

"I sat with my back to it a long time this morning," I told her.

"But do you like it? You like my other things, I know, because I noticed at once."

"Surely I haven't—"

"Oh, yes, you did. You're rather a noticing person. Shall I tell you about what you wanted to know? I couldn't at lunch, of course."

"At lunch?"

"When you watched me taking off my gloves. Of course, it would be difficult for you when you didn't know," said Dacia. "You wondered if I'd got a ring on."

"I didn't mean—"

"But of course you would. Only, you see, if you had thought properly about it, you would have known that wouldn't tell you."

"Wouldn't tell me what?"

"What you wanted to know. Because—well, look at these gloves."

The Bridge House was discharging its guests as we passed. I thought

that one of them regarded me a little curiously. But Dacia did not see him.

"You see. Well now, if you were to wear a great ring underneath—but you couldn't, could you?"

"No."

"Well, that's what I mean. But then, don't you see, if you couldn't anyhow do that, it wouldn't be any good trying to guess—no good for you to try, I mean, would it?"

"Not the least."

"And as a matter of fact, you see, I simply wouldn't wear one anyhow. So when I was asked—Of course, Roderick said I ought to have."

"Your brother?"

"Yes. And I just said I wouldn't; you see?"

"But—"

"Well, that's what you were wondering about, isn't it? Oh, I *say*," she broke off suddenly, stopping short as she spoke. "Who would have thought it? Why, it's Polly!"

Two young men stood before us. One of them was tall and with something of a slouch, but dressed with the utmost care; the other, short and broad, with a freckled face of infinite good humor, suggested various comparisons with a pug dog.

"I *am* glad to see you," said Dacia. "Where are you going?"

"Wherever you're goin', if I may," replied Polly with a comprehensive grin.

"But we're—Oh, but do you know each other? Mr. Tom Leland, Mr. Markwick, Polly? His real name is George Augustus Poltonbar, you know, only nobody can say that, so he's called Polly. And oh, I *am* glad to see you," said Dacia again. "Now I can talk to everybody about everything."

And she set off towards the playing fields with Leland on one side of her and Polly on the other. I walked with them till we came to Sheep's Bridge, and there, I believe even with some re-



lief, I met a friend who stopped to speak to me. Dacia nodded gaily over her shoulder, and as my friend passed on I was left alone.

I wandered down Poet's Walk and looked across over the familiar water to the willows under the bridge. Then I turned and stood staring at the color of the lime-trees in the stream; I walked back and came to the river by Fellows' Eyot, and watched the current running down from the weir above. And then it occurred to me that I must return the way I came in order to meet Octavia if she were following with Robert; she would be looking for me and wondering where I was. So I went back slowly enough, and had got no further than the entrance to the cloisters when I found myself arguing that I did not know which way Octavia would be coming, that she might already have gone on to the cricket in Upper Club while I was standing by the river. And in a minute I was walking quickly back again through the playing fields, with one single purpose in my mind, which was to find Dacia; to find her wherever she was, attended by whom or how many I cared nothing; all I wanted was to find her and see her and hear her laugh.

And I did find her. She was standing in a group of whom I knew only two, and they were the two with whom I had left her. A third was the man I had seen coming down the steps of the Bridge House, and the others I had not seen before. And I know she saw me coming, for I saw her throw up her chin as she did in the wood when I met her first. But she did not look at me; she just stood there smiling and talking and playing with her parasol, and she did not turn her head when I walked away.

I saw her once more that afternoon. There was an interval in the cricket between the innings, and she was

walking across the ground with one of the group I had seen an hour before. His head was bent and he spoke quickly, but Dacia walked looking straight before her; then, as I crossed behind her she put out her arm and turned her hand as she had done when I had walked with her down from the castle; she half stopped, looked at her companion and shook her head, and for one moment I thought she was going to leave him; then she laughed and walked on.

I found Octavia and Robert as they were leaving the playing fields for tea.

"I've been looking for you," I told them.

"You've passed us twice, you know," said Octavia. "Where's Dacia?"

"I passed her twice," I said. "That's all I know."

Robert laughed. "And it's all I expected," he said.

"She is just a little wild," observed Octavia.

"Did you tell me she was engaged to be married?" I asked.

"She was. But she isn't any longer. She told us the engagement was off, when we were coming down in the car."

"I expect she'll tell you it's on again when we go up in the car," said Robert, grimly.

"But not the same," urged Octavia. "It couldn't be. The poor man's in Hyderabad."

"The next poor man will be in Hades," observed Robert.

"Do you think he's giving her tea in Hades now?" asked Octavia. "I don't know if it has occurred to you that I'm supposed to be the child's chaperon."

"Dacia knows the kind of chaperon to choose," said Robert.

"I wasn't thinking so much about Hades as tea. If she gets no tea——"

"She'll get the best tea there is to

be got. She's probably having strawberry ices with the Governing Body."

"Then let's look for her at absence," said Octavia.

But Dacia was not to be seen at absence. Six o'clock came, and the school yard filled with its gay gathering. Octavia was as delighted as she always used to be with the uniforms of the crews of the boats, with the silver oars in the straw hats, the white duck trousers, the buckled shoes, the coxswains with their cocked hats and bouquets of flowers. But Dacia was nowhere to be seen. We went on down to the Brocas, and watched the boats start one by one up the broad level of the river. And at seven o'clock Robert, who is exasperatingly punctual, stood by his car and glanced at his watch.

"Now you've got your cross-examining face on," said Octavia, "and I know you're going to be horrid."

"I'm not going to be late," said Robert.

"Of course you're not," agreed Octavia.

"If she's late, how is she going to get home to-night?" asked Robert.

"But she's not. She's going to dine with us and go on to a dance with the Daintrees. I arranged that. I couldn't let the poor child go home alone at this time of night. So I told her to bring her things and stay. She can go to-morrow, you see," explained Octavia.

"I might have known you'd have made some extraordinary arrangement," said Robert. "Ten minutes past seven. I'll give her till a quarter past. Then I shall start."

"You'll make a perfectly hateful judge, you know," observed Octavia.

"Twelve minutes past," said Robert.

"I'll go and look for her," I volunteered. "I'll be back in five minutes."

"Two," said Robert.

I came back in ten minutes, and on

my way met Mr. Poltonbar, who beamed.

"It's all right," he said; "she's in the car. But you're a bit late, aren't you? There's somebody waiting for you with a watch."

The watch clicked as Robert stepped into the car. I took my seat by the driver. We returned to Berkshire Gardens.

Robert got out, and helped out Dacia, who went in; then Octavia. I followed Octavia, to wish her good night in the hall before going on to dinner. Robert strode upstairs, two steps at a time as he always does. Octavia said good night to me and followed him. Dacia was nowhere to be seen. I stood for a moment with my hand on the inner hall door.

And just then Dacia looked over the banisters. She came downstairs apparently occupied with a refractory glove-button.

"Well, good night," I said.

"But aren't you coming in?"

"No," I said; "I'm going out again."

"But won't you be here for dinner?"

"I'm afraid not. I'm dining out."

"And you won't be at the dance?"

"No," I said. "It's one of my nights at the *Quadrant* office."

Dacia regarded her glove. "Are you doing it because you—because I—because of this afternoon?" she asked.

"I'm not doing it for anything."

"Then couldn't you—"

"I'm late already, I'm afraid."

"Do please help me with this glove," said Dacia. "Thank you very much. You see, that's what I'm like. It's no good; I couldn't alter even if I were to try."

"I don't want you to alter."

"Well, that's just it, you see. Oh, I say," she broke off, "I must go and dress, else I shall be late again. You know, Robert *was* so cross with me in the car coming home. Really cross."

"I wouldn't have been."

"No. But—Oh, do think!" Dacia, half way up a flight of stairs, turned and leant over the banisters. "Do just think! In two hours—in actually two hours——"

"I know."

"Are you cross you won't be there?"

A gong boomed.

"Oh, my goodness!" cried Dacia, and disappeared.

(To be continued.)

Eric Parker.

## GRAND-AUNTS.

Grand-aunts add much to the color and romance of life. Happy is the child who has his quiver full of them. His mind will be richly stored with family legends, and he will learn a pious respect for the next generation but one.

I have never reckoned the full complement of our grand-aunts, but I think it must be near a score, for my Irish grandfather had nine sisters for his share.

Grand-aunts fall into two classes, the living and the dead. Of the first class there are two divisions, the married and the single. For the married there is a distinct type to which grand-aunts ought to conform. As to their dress, for example—it should be black in color, silky in texture, and ample, making a rustling noise over the floor. The ideal grand-aunt will wear over this dress a white cashmere shawl, on her head a tulle cap with a veil if she be a widow, and, indeed, in my imagination she is always a widow, for I have no recollection of any grand-uncles whatsoever, though I have reason to believe that they existed at one time. Around her neck she has frequently a thick gold chain with a pearl cross suspended to it, at other times a necklace of miniature billiard-balls with an ivory cross. Occasionally she pins a vast cameo brooch among her laces, or a slab of cool agate set in gold. All her garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, or their British equivalents,

lavender, cedar, and eau-de-Cologne.

The true grand-aunt is of medium height, but she stoops a little. She sits in a dim, elegant room, among chintz-covered furniture and albums and old pictures.

Her voice is low and mellow. She speaks kindly to little children, pressing each one to the soft laces and jewelry on her bosom while she says "Darling" with gentle emphasis.

Her grand-nieces or nephews do not sit long with her except at tea-time, when she gives them sponge-cake; if it is not sponge it is certainly madeira. Her cups and saucers are very fragile and beautiful. It is difficult to suppose what would happen if one of them were to get broken. When a grand-aunt is present no one makes loud noises or careless jests. All listen to her attentively when she speaks. She talks on and on in that low, mellow voice which is so different from the treble of a child. Her memory is wonderful; it is stored with the names of all her relations, and she mentions each one and asks for news or tells it. She is almost invariably a grandmother herself, and so the grand-nieces and nephews and the grandchildren usually leave the room together, walking softly and shutting the door quietly behind them. Outside in the garden they forget their ancestors, and play and shout and quarrel until it is time to say good-bye to the grand-aunt in the dim drawing-room.

Of the single grand-aunt I remember but one example, and she was my godmother. Although I cannot have seen her more than four or five times, and that before I was nine years old, yet her personality has become very distinct to me—or so I fancy. I have two possessions of hers that bring her constantly into touch with the present—her watch and her little volume of the "Christian Year."

When we knew her she was under the shadow of misfortune, for a sunstroke had clouded an intellect that had once been very acute. Every summer we paid her a solemn visit in the dull genteel Dublin house where she resided. She was always kind, but full of complaints and suspicions. This was the result of the sunstroke. One of her sorrows made a deep impression on me; it was confided to us in a quick undertone, for she was in constant fear of eavesdroppers. "My dear," she said, "your uncle has taken my garden roller, and so I can never go visiting."

She was fond of her cats, which she called "hens." "That dear little white hen always sleeps in my room," she would say—this to our great delight, for, not apprehending the sorrow of her state, we found rare amusement in these sayings.

Since those days I have been able to see her as she must have been, a clever and dominant woman who somehow could not fit into the pattern of family life. Whether it were a desire to improve the younger generation, as when she insisted that her nieces and nephews should repeat poetry while they waited for the dinner-gong, or her zeal to discern waste or bad management in other people's households, by some means she alienated that cordial affection that is extended to milder and less zealous relations. So her life must have been passed in loneliness of the spirit

which falls often enough upon the good and well-meaning.

The little, worn "Christian Year" that was given to me on her death tells me much of her story, the rather dry and uneventful story that was her life.

Why should we faint, and fear to live  
alone,  
Since all alone, so Heaven has will'd,  
we die;  
Nor even the tenderest heart, and next  
our own,  
Knows half the reasons why we smile  
and sigh?

These lines are marked with double pencillings by one who had, it is certain, found them applicable to herself.

The "Christian Year" was at the zenith of popularity when this grand-aunt lived. I can picture her reading it Sunday by Sunday, marking what she liked, connecting the poems with some happy time, for by one is written in delicate writing:

"Tintern. August 24, 1851."

Here, trebly scored, are the lines:

Were it not better to lie still,  
Let Him strike home and bless the  
rod,  
Never so safe as when our will  
Yields undiscern'd by all but God?  
Now her mortal body does lie still in  
one of the most beautiful places in  
Ireland, the old churchyard at  
Powerscourt.

Another example of the single grand-aunt was Aunt Georgie. I know her only by hearsay. She was English and belonged to the other side of the family. A wonderful, brilliant, tiresome, and absolutely impossible Bohemian she was, at one time companion to a member of the Esterhazy family, at another in lodgings in the Old Kent Road. She was a torment to her relations, whose sense of duty bade them try to provide for her in old age. The last time that a grand-niece saw her she was in bed in a

curious bedgown and cap, partly magnificent, partly sordid, her tongue active in jest, invective, and the liveliest gossip, but withal something of the fallen princess about her. A sorry old lady—God rest her.

We come now to the grand-aunts who live only in memory with something of the fragrance of dried flowers clinging about them, delicate little phantom ladies with corkscrew curls, long, bare throats, and voluminous skirts. Only good is spoken of them now, and to make them human one must endow them with some little ladylike faults, something impetuous about the hearts under those neat silken or muslin bodices.

In their time they were young and ardent and all the world was theirs. They took no heed of grand-nieces and grand-nephews to come. They basked in the sunshine of their own day, and were, no doubt, modern young women who looked upon their own grand-aunts as quite behind the times.

As I write three of them look down from the walls with sweet, half-smiling faces. How aloof they are now from the turmoil of time, the passionate fret and business of this little moment!

There is Aunt Maggie, whose memory is still fragrant. Those who remember her speak of her always as "dear aunt Maggie." In her portrait she wears a white dress and a pink-and-white bow at her throat. Her smooth fair hair is parted above a high forehead, and brought into rolls and curls behind her ears.

She was loved devotedly. There is always something of romance in the minds of those who talk about her. My mother, as a little child, picked off the heads of all the roses she found and arranged them on the staircase, so that this wonderful Aunt Maggie should walk over them. She was of those who bring the art of living to

high perfection and invest all their actions with a certain glamour.

Her nieces adored her. To them she was the embodiment of that elusive thing, romance. Her dress, her talk, her very manner of crossing a room or going upstairs were charming to those who lived with her. Whether she walked up and down the garden paths or rode abroad on her gray pony, she was exquisite and always admirable.

That she inspired the other sex with a sense of her charm is certain. Two scholars were anxious to teach her Greek, but the right man could not teach her to love. She was of those unhappy ones who love well but not wisely.

On the hill above the woods at Knockmaroon, my great-grandfather's home, was a rustic arbor called the Octagon. This must have been the scene of many a tender passage, many dreams, hopes, and disappointments. The roof was adorned with shells stuck in plaster, whereupon lovers wrote their names bracketed together. But Aunt Maggie's name was not there. Perhaps the faithful lover begged to write his with her own, and was refused, for her heart was sore at the bitter ending of a pleasant friendship that grew in this same Octagon.

She became consumptive, a romantic thing in those days, when ill-health had something genteel about it. There was no talk then of Davos and winter sports, but she went to live at Torquay and sat by the fire with her feet on the fender while her pretty, pleasant little life ebbed away.

Then came the shadowy love affair that heightened her inherent romance, and also, perhaps, her sorrows. She had a friend, a very attractive friend, an Oxford don. I can construct a picture of him to match the portrait of Aunt Maggie. Thoughtful, intellectual, sympathetic—all these things he must



have been. There was much letter-writing. How the consumptive girl lived and longed for those letters from Oxford, what anxious waiting day by day, what palpitating moments when they came! And then her replies: one can picture her sitting at desk or table—in her bedroom, I feel certain, with the door locked—the paper thin and wide, her writing very small and neat, the words all blown one way. Somehow I know, though I never saw journal or letter of hers, that all her innocent heart and all her cultivated, well-informed mind went into those letters to the Oxford don.

And there were meetings, too, pleasant walks and talks, warm evenings when they saw the moon shine on the sea, and the don so nearly threw prudence to the careless sea-wind.

To marry would have been to resign his fellowship, but some day a living might be offered to him, some pretty country parish with a rectory overgrown with roses and ivy, and then—

In those days heredity cannot have been the bugbear it is now. I do not think its shadow fell across Aunt Maggie's dreams. Her hopes rose when news came that the Oxford don had been offered a certain parish.

God alone knows what visions passed through the mind of his faithful friend who had been his pupil and his spiritual comrade. She who had lived on his daily letter as on her daily bread, what hopes must have been hers!

But the don had prudent moments. He resigned the living in favor of a friend. He kept his fellowship and his celibacy, and his letters grew shorter and fewer. It was the slow, cruel intimation of a wisdom that had superseded loving folly. He was wise, of course, not to marry a consumptive woman. It is easy to see that. But the lesson must have been a harder

one for her than the Greek he had taught so willingly in the old sunny days.

She was a docile pupil. The women of her day were not rebellious. She must have learnt her new lesson with a quiet dignity, and yet in the end it killed her.

The don was to visit friends in the neighborhood; Aunt Maggie was at Bangor now. He was expected, it seems, by a certain train, so she drove to meet him.

He did not come and she drove back again, conscious now that it was very cold. Later he sent some slight excuse. But the end of the story had come. The tragedy of her life was to be the little inconsequent tragedy of unnumbered women's lives, a history told in two words—nothing happened.

Now she had time to be conscious of the bitter chill in the air, and she caught cold, and, not having her don's letters to live for, she died. So there was an end to the pretty graciousness of her life, with its dreams and hopes, its letters and walks and talks. And there she is on the wall in her gold frame, with her golden hair and her white dress and pink bow—poor little grand-aunt.

From another wall Aunt Jenny and Aunt Anna look down benignly. They both wear blue silk dresses, low at the throat, with soft white frills. They have the smoothest hair in the world; one understands why "glossy" was a favorite adjective with the novelists of that day.

Of Aunt Jenny I know nothing, but Grand-aunt Anna seems dear and familiar, though she died long before I was born. To me her charm is her ready adaptability. Her nieces describe her as always radiant. But why was she radiant? She was the daughter of a schoolmaster at Reading, and later the wife of a botanist whose soul was absorbed in *Saxifraga* and

Primulaceæ. Aunt Anna's position seems always to have been a relative one. Her temperament and her talents, which were considerable, made her a delightful companion, but there is no record that she ever insisted on their own intrinsic importance. Yet she was so good an artist that a professional life would have brought her ample reward, perhaps fame. The portraits on the wall are her own work. She was an excellent portrait painter.

A girl so gifted would in these days justly demand a thorough training in an art school, and then her own professional life, her studio, her own circle of friends. Aunt Anna, on the contrary, remained at home in Reading and painted her parents, her sisters, and herself with all the art that was in her. When she was not painting she did exquisite needlework, embroideries on lawn so fine that the fairies might have plied the needle, a set of handkerchiefs for my grandmother's trousseau, a long black scarf worked in colors, a piece of craft that would not have shamed a Japanese, and a black satin cushion decorated with embroidered flowers copied from their own garden blooms, a monumental piece of needlework.

I have it on hearsay that she was a brilliant pianist and a charming talker—a woman of temperament, certainly. And yet she was radiant. The quiet home life at Reading, the quiet life with her botanist, her wanderings with him in search of saxifrages—these things seemed to satisfy her soul. Work for its own sake, without fame, was enough for her. I must admit she presents a greater problem to my mind than the unsatisfied artist soul of to-day. In some way her life was complete and happy, and she seemed to her relations "radiant."

The only time she found herself, as far as I know, under the public eye

was in some letters contributed to a book, "The Dolomite Mountains," brought out by her husband and a friend of his, Josiah Gilbert, and even here her personality is cheerfully suppressed in the greater interest of what she saw and the doings of "my husband." I know not what epitaph they gave her, but this legend, "A happy woman," would have surely been the highest praise.

Another aunt enshrined in family tradition is almost ancestral now—great-grand-aunt Marcella. She was my grandfather's aunt by marriage, but far younger than he was. She had married at eighteen a husband of forty-eight, but so devoted was she that once her antagonist in a game of chess beguiled her into a false move that lost her the game by a flattering comparison of her husband to the Lord Lieutenant.

Aunt Marcella was a lady of adventure, innocent and gay adventure. I have often wondered how she found herself in these "galleys," but many of the facts are lost in that mist which is the past. For example, Aunt Marcella was left in the wildest of Swiss hostels by her brother, who, however, gave strict orders to the men of the place to take care of her till he returned. When night fell the solitary lady retired to such bedroom as the place afforded. To her surprise the door opened and all the men trooped in, ranging themselves along one wall, but with a demeanor entirely subdued and discreet.

Aunt Marcella, perhaps for lack of the language, could not persuade them to go. At last, in despair, she fell on her knees by the bedside and began to say her prayers. At once, with bowed heads and reverent footfall, the men filed out of the room, leaving her alone. At a bound she reached the door and bolted it. They knocked in vain. Later she heard them snoring

without, like faithful watchdogs keeping guard over her.

During her Swiss wanderings she struck up a friendship with the ill-fated Lord Francis Douglas. Her friendly office was to darn his socks; his, no doubt, to tell her of high adventure on perilous peaks. I am sure she wept bitter tears for his death on the Matterhorn.

Family legend asserts that Aunt Marcella was a beautiful young woman of the Southern Irish type, raven-haired, blue-eyed. I have it on this authority that she owned a splendid black velvet dress that was taken out of its gathers every summer and laid by, amidst camphor and cedar bags, to await the next winter. Perhaps Aunt Marcella's Irish beauty combined with her Irish innocence of mind and manner explain the crowning adventure of her life. This took place in Brussels, whither she had gone with her brother, Mr. Egan, a less emotional person than his sister, it would seem by the sequel.

One fine morning the two of them, walking the streets and squares of Brussels, beheld a royal carriage at the door of the chief photographer.

Aunt Marcella, all emotion, stood still.

"I know," said she, "that the Prince of Wales is in there, and the Crown Princess of Denmark and Princess Alexandra, and the King of Belgium and——"

Mr. Egan had Fenian sympathies, perhaps, or was a philosopher of the Diogenes type, or a Socialist. In any case he described himself as quite indifferent to the doings of royalty, and begged his sister, in brotherly fashion, not to be ridiculous. However, Aunt Marcella was true to her enthusiasms, and she parted with Mr. Egan, the king-hater, and made her way boldly to the photographer's. There she was greeted by a young man, very suave,

very charming, as your true photographer should be. What did madam wish? Madam thereupon explained that her Prince, her own beautiful young Prince of Wales, was within and she would give incredible riches to see him, if monsieur would but permit. Monsieur, the suave young man, looked into Aunt Marcella's shining blue eyes and said that madam must certainly have her heart's desire. The royal party was now upstairs in the studio, but there was another room quite close where madam could wait and see them descend the stairs. Would she permit him to escort her to this vantage-ground?

Together they ascended the stairs and Aunt Marcella seated herself on plush-covered chair or sofa, or whatever the photographer indicated. But he too took a chair beside her. "A little presuming, perhaps," thought Aunt Marcella, "but this is a foreign country."

"You love your Prince very dearly, madam, is it not so?" asked the young man.

"Yes, indeed, and the father, his poor dear father, the Prince Consort. Oh, how we loved him!"

"Yes?"

"Such a good man, oh! such a truly religious man. And how wise he was not to leave a lot of money to his needy German relations."

The young man smiled discreetly. One might have said that his eyes twinkled, but somehow I fancy Aunt Marcella was as serious as many of her compatriots who excite an amusement in others that they rarely feel themselves. Looking at this pleasant but rather familiar young foreigner, she felt a strong desire to speak profitable words to him. No doubt he was a pagan, like all the inhabitants of the Continent, and some words of grace might be acceptable.

"Do you know," she asked, "the

hymn that our dear Prince Albert loved so much? It was repeated to him on his death-bed. It is called 'Rock of Ages.' Perhaps you would like me to say it now?"

"Madam is too good. Of all things I should like to hear her repeat 'Rock of Ages.'"

Aunt Marcella, with simplicity and much fervor, now repeated "Rock of Ages" to the photographer, who listened with bent head in a very respectful attitude.

"Beautiful, madam; I thank you a thousand times."

At this moment the door opened, and a footman in some royal livery came in with decanters and wine-glasses on a tray.

"Madam will take wine?"

Again Aunt Marcella was a little shocked by so much freedom. But the young man had listened very respectfully to "Rock of Ages," and evidently he meant well, so she declined graciously and the servant departed.

"Will not madam herself be photographed to-day?"

This was, of course, a very natural question. The young man had his business to consider, but Aunt Marcella excused herself. She was, she explained, embarrassed when she posed alone. With another it was different, but as she was by herself . . . no, she really could not face the ordeal.

The young man met her gaze with a charming smile. "Would not madam then consent to stand with me for her photograph?"

This time Aunt Marcella must have been really shocked. Perhaps she became chilly and aloof after her decided refusal, for the photographer rose to leave her, saying he would see if the royal party were about to descend. If madam would stand in the alcove on the stairs she would see her

Prince, his future bride, and the other royalties.

Aunt Marcella now forgot her displeasure and thanked him cordially. The trouble was, she explained, that she seemed to lose the sight of her eyes when she did see royalty; however, she would try to be calm.

The young man ran upstairs and entered the studio. There was a sound of loud and prolonged laughter, then the door opened and out came the Prince of Wales leaning on the photographer's arm. They came downstairs and paused opposite to Aunt Marcella.

"Madam, here is your Prince. Do not lose the sight of your eyes." The most courteous of bows from the Prince, a magnificent sweeping curtsy from radiant, blushing Aunt Marcella.

Presently a bevy of princesses trooped downstairs: more curtsies and smiles. In the wide hall these obliging royalties stood for a time laughing and talking, showing all their facets, as it were, to the wondering, delighted onlookers.

Later, breathless, overwhelmed, she inquired of the true photographer the name of the young man who had placed her on the stairs, who had offered her wine, who had suggested posing with her for a photograph, who had listened to "Rock of Ages," who . . . It was Maximilian, Archduke of Austria, future Emperor of Mexico.

Mr. Egan, the bearish, the brotherly, considered that his sister had made herself a laughing-stock for the royalties of Europe; but as for Aunt Marcella, I think she felt a secret elation in her innocent adventure with Maximilian, as she always called him. But there was yet a sequel. Some weeks later Aunt Marcella, the wanderer, was in Paris, walking down some boulevard, when, on a sudden, with dash and glitter of magnificence,

the Archduke Maximilian's carriage drove by.

In a moment he saw and recognized Aunt Marcella of the raven locks and shining eyes. He rose, he bowed. He stood there bowing, his hat off, giving the delighted lady every token of royal recognition and honor.

"Ah! poor Maximilian, poor Maximilian," Aunt Marcella would say when she thought of that gay morn-

*The Cornhill Magazine.*

ing in Brussels and of that dark day when the Emperor of Mexico was shot down by his people.

No tragic end was hers; she grew middle-aged and very stout, and her days slipped by in a quiet house in Dublin. But the thought of those old adventures must have gladdened the slow-foot hours as they ticked her life away.

*W. M. Letts.*

### THE SILENCE OF JOURNALISTS.

Modern journalism, as I pointed out last month,<sup>1</sup> is in its nature fastidious and selective—especially the sort of journalism generally thought vulgar and full of licence. The Yellow Press is as artificial a work of art as the Yellow Book, and as artistic. And the artistic effect it aims at is not music but silence. If any one is so paradoxical as to say there can be no such thing as a noisy silence, I can only refer him to the descriptions of the silence in Nature as it is described in numberless novels and poems; a silence "broken only" by the crash of waves or the bellowing of bulls or the distant trumpeting of elephants, or any other factor needed for complete silence. In any case, it is very possible to be verbally talkative while being spiritually silent. A conjurer while doing his patter is verbally talkative though spiritually silent. His main purpose is to make men ignore things, and the main purpose of the modern newspaper is to make men ignore things. I mean that the object is to make men ignorant; ignorant of something important, while they are interested and even learned in some things entirely trivial. The rabbits come out of the hat because we look at the hat and not at the hands. The

conjurer is silent, though he is talking all the time. The same description applies precisely to the modern journalist.

It is very difficult indeed to define the nature of this distraction; to remember all the patter that has pleased us at one time or another. It is very much more difficult to analyze the moral element that makes such things possible.

Those of us who have had the pleasure of arguing with an intellectual modern lady have probably been puzzled to name the nameless quality of sex by which she seemed to be outside the law, as well as inside it. Broadly, you might say that she not only refuses to listen to what you say, but she refuses to listen to what she says. But indeed, it is more subtle than this; it is a kind of brilliant blindness, a kind of agile obstinacy, that is not at all appropriate to the discussion of any definite point of truth. In the last analysis, it can best be compared with the old legal dilemma about refusing to plead. I do not for a moment suggest that these ladies should have heavy weights placed on their chests until they do plead; though whether I suggest it or not, my Suffragette friends will say I did. One of them recently

<sup>1</sup> *The Living Age*, January 17, 1914.



declared (as I understand the declaration) that I thought no young lady could avoid my besieging attentions or resist my marvellous fascinations unless she could brandish the terrible instrument called a vote. But I touch on this elusive quality only because it is the one parallel I can suggest to the singular spirit that has taken hold of the modern Press.

The Press still goes in (somewhat cautiously) for what it calls "Correspondence." I wish it would go in for another and more essential quality which I might call "respondance." I mean the quality that would instinctively react upon any protest made against it: I mean the impulse to reply, as men do when they are rung up on the telephone or struck smartly on the tip of the nose. I know nothing of psychology or medicine; but I think there must be a word for the responsive faculties of the brain and body, those beautiful faculties that make us hit at the moment the man who has hurt us, instead of going on progressive principles and hitting somebody a long time afterwards who has never hurt us at all. Now, in that quality, whether we call it sensibility or sense, whether we call it being spiteful or being spirited, whether we call it pride or self-examination, whether we call it justice or revenge—all this is apparently impossible to the modern newspaper. It cannot hit back when it is hit; it cannot listen to reason or even to unreason; it cannot answer the plainest question if it is plainly asked. The old Victorian idea was that England was free because anybody could write a letter to the *Times*. But anybody cannot; the great newspapers sort and sift their letters more carefully every day.

Now in this matter the common advertisements on the boardings are much more honest than the daily papers. The advertisers used to say,

"Don't look at this"; obviously meaning that we should look at it. But the modern journalist goes a step beyond this imposture and misleading of the public. He says, "Do look at this"; because he wants you not to look at something else. I give an example, in passing, out of the events that have been going on before us. A recently elected Member of Parliament, a most excellent man in private life, was photographed in the Press in some five or fifteen or five hundred different attitudes; and was enforced and reinforced with perpetual headlines saying, "Home Rule the Issue." Thus, if in one snapshot, he was lifting both hands, it was in sheer horror at Home Rule. If he was lifting one hand it was in solemn warning against Home Rule. If he was giving his hands a rest, he was simply paralyzed by the distant prospect of Home Rule. If he had been snapshotted in the act of hitting the table, which many orators have done, no doubt he would be hitting Home Rule. Or if he had been snapshotted in the act of falling under the table (which many orators have also done) he would be sinking under the unendurable catastrophe of Home Rule. I should think it very probable, since the man was a sensible man (I know him but slightly) that he talked about more important things—or at least, things more important for Englishmen. But the essence of the truth is this: that the journalists who wrote those words, "Home Rule the Issue," cared less about Ireland than I do; and therefore infinitely less than any Irishman must. "Home Rule the Issue," translated into plain English, simply meant "Marconi not the Issue." And that candidate who was photographed in those attitudes had actually promised his Home Rule opponent not to mention an Italian surname.

In my last article I pointed out that

modern journalism is an aristocratic thing; its object is not to include all kinds, but rather to exclude them. In this article I wish to point out that its object is not to excite the public, but rather to soothe the public. This is, of course, the explanation of the unintelligible nonsense that appears in so large a part of the Press. If you say "Hey Diddle Diddle" as a lullaby, it will very probably lull, if you say "Hey Diddle Diddle" as the last news from the war or the Stock Exchange, it will disappoint many. "Hey Diddle Diddle" means rather more than "Home Rule the Issue" for any man with the faintest patriotic feeling about the present state of purely English politics. But whichever form of words we happen to prefer, they are both meant for lullabies.

Now the essential fact about journalism nowadays is that it never by any chance publishes anything that could possibly wake people up. One paper did indeed invent a massacre in China that had never happened: but then it was in China; and the typical modern journal is mistress of herself, though China fall. But the general journalistic effort, in the existing state of affairs, is to under-rate the interest of what is going on. Any one who has been at an election or a battle, or even at the manoeuvres, knows how much more human is the reality than the report. So all modern politics is a sham fight; but even a sham fight is more genuine than the sham report of a sham fight. The lie that knows itself to be a lie is very nearly a truth. Thus the very cynicism which is now the main mark of the governing class makes it a little livelier than it is made in the pomposities of the Press. Even statesmen are not such fools as they look (in newspaper portraits especially); and even Westminster is not so gray as it is painted.

It should be noted that to this su-

preme necessity of tact and the soothing of souls the journalist will sacrifice even journalism. He would rather make a story totally unintelligible than make it too exciting. It is often asked in a supercilious manner by those who wish to teach humanity, but refuse to learn from it, why the reading public rushes for the news of murders and such practical matters; and why the plain man in a tavern or a tram would rather talk about Dr. Crippen than Dr. Clifford. The light-minded (among whom I will never be numbered) may be content to reply that Dr. Crippen is the more interesting of the two. But indeed there is a better answer; or at least a more delicate one. One reason at least why the average man reads the news of a murder trial, such as the Crippen case, with some care and reflection, is this: that it is one of the very few forms of news which is told sufficiently truthfully for him to be able to make head or tail of it. If we still had such an occasion as a State Trial, that is, if an important man could be impeached nowadays for treason or sedition or sorcery or blasphemy, no doubt most of our journalists would be as confused and as confusing as they were over the Marconi Committee. But nowadays, all that the old-fashioned sentimentalist felt about the impossibility of laying his hand upon a lady, the modern journalist feels about laying it on a gentleman. So democratic is the age that I gravely doubt whether Lord Mohun or the Marquise de Brinvilliers would now be brought to trial at all. But the plutocracy that controls our press has no particular reason for suppressing what happened between Crippen and his unhappy wife. For the reader of the newspaper, therefore, things became for the first time clear and connected in the printed page. Reality almost becomes as sane and credible

as romance. When a rich man is concerned the story is like a three-volume novel of which we have only the second volume: its only resemblance to Melchizedec is in being without beginning or end. Or it is like a novel I once read by one of our wealthiest and most prolific novelists, in which the name of the heroine was calmly altered in the middle of the book. But the story of Crippen, though a horrible story, was a story; and the clear recounting of it was a work far more worthy of the dignity of the human intellect than the average shuffling leading article or truncated foreign news. It is true that this irrational secrecy, like all irrational things, sometimes recoils on itself; and produces effects opposite to those which it perhaps intends. This can be curiously noted in the case which is most difficult to discuss, the question of decorum and reticence in certain dangerous elements of life. I should say that most of the journalists who deal with divorce or the *crime passionnel* probably try to make the topic decent. But their test of decency seems to me very strange. They seem to think that no harm can be done by forty or fifty material details of criminality, so long as they do not accuse the criminal of his crime. These people are always talking of the effect upon the young: I think most of us who have been young will agree that no great harm would have been done to us by the mention of some monstrosity by its old plain Latin or legal name (which we should not only not understand but not specially want to understand), but great harm might have been done to us by leaving us to get hideous hints out of a senseless and brainless story; and wonder what devilry might be done with a door-key and a cabstand or with a policeman and a postcard.

But compare with a case like that

of Crippen, the comparatively poor man who is almost alone punished in our community, any case in which the political passions of any ruling groups are concerned. Compare the accounts we got of the murder charge against Crippen with the accounts we got of the murder charge against Beilliss. The matter is repulsive, but relevant: in the Crippen case everything turned on a minute scar, of which we were given the most minute details (rightly or wrongly), and which we were expected to study through every loathsome transfiguration of surgery or putrefaction; though it was not inflicted by the murderer, but was only an indirect piece of evidence against him. In the case of the poor boy at Kleff, there were something like thirty separate scars, all of which were inflicted by the murderer (whoever he was), and the number and position of which were not the chief point, but really the only point in the whole business. Yet most of the English papers (particularly those theoretically dedicated to the worship of liberty) said next-door to nothing about the chief point. We heard from time to time that something had been contradicted—something we had never heard said. We heard that a German doctor whom we did not know, had a low opinion of a Russian doctor whom we had not been allowed to hear of. The correspondents could not tell a truth on Tuesday without practically admitting that they had suppressed a truth on Monday. They could not even rejoice in the Russian jury's justice without virtually confessing their own past injustice. All sorts of weird motives were attributed to the jury that acquitted the man; except indeed the quaint thought (which I entertain) that they acquitted Beilliss because he was innocent. But if twelve British pressmen had been as enlightened and civilized as those

twelve peasants, we might have opened a new world; might have really understood Israel or understood Russia. As it is, we were hurriedly told there was no such thing as Ritual

The British Review.

Murder (the one thing that was not proved): the rest was silence. And the creation of a silence is the aim of journalism.

G. K. Chesterton.

## HANS ACROSS THE BORDER.

BY LIEUT.-COLONEL G. F. MACMUNN, D.S.O.

"Mor—r—re bee—i—er! Moore bi—errr!"

A bleer-eyed, half-terrified Teuton face appeared round the door of the mess anteroom and preferred its demand for liquid refreshment, "More beer!" To which Branson, who sat in the mess, had promptly responded.

"Oh, bearer! *Baja wallah sahib ko aur beer shrab do.*" And then to the ramshackle Teuton who had now brought himself into the room muffled up in wraps—

"Certainly, William." His name was Hans, but then William is good German for all Teutons,—“certainly, they'll bring it in a minute. How's that old piano getting on?"

"Ach, not at al. I tel you, mister, it is von thing to tchun a pi-ano when onlee von or two strrings are wrrongg. It is anoder thing to tchun a pi-ano when al ze strrings are wrrong, so!" and with this rolling protest the dishevelled figure withdrew itself, and in the next room the beer could be heard going gluck-gluck.

Hans Breitman was a piano-tuner from Lahore, whom business had brought all the way up the Tochi to tune a piano in the mess-house of a frontier militia corps, all because too long a life of carousal in messes and places where they sing had been too much for its internals. At last the mess had said they could stand it no longer and had telegraphed to Lahore for a tuner, regardless of expense.

And in due course the tuner had ar-

1 "Give the music-man some more beer."

rived. Poor tuner! Life in Lahore, where the trades society is considerable, had been bearable enough to the German employee of a music depôt, but the journey to the frontier to carry out the order had been a terrifying experience. He had had to come many miles by rail, while long-haired men of the North had stared into his railway carriage, and then he had driven eighty miles through rock and sand and dust and evils till he had got to the other end of nowhere. But at the other end of nowhere he found that his troubles were only about to begin, for now he had to cross the British border, past militia posts that were full of armed men. A *tonga* and mounted escort of levies awaited him, and the wind down the pass grew colder and colder and the road grew rougher and rougher. The fierce men of the "lvy," with their shaggy sheep-skin coats and long knives and wild appearance, had brought that poor tuner to a state of collapse, so that when he arrived at the end of a fifty miles' trans-border drive, it took many bottles of beer to restore him. Bass and Murree beer, "*Helles*" and "*Dunkles*," were poured into him, and his fireplace was piled high with logs, and it was not till nearly noon the day after his arrival that "William" could turn to with the piano in which "Al ze strrings are wrrongg."

The very interior of the fort was terrifying, for the great snow hills enclosed it, and to the north lay the huge white wall of the Sufaid Koh.

Each company in the fort as they fell in daily on their company parades looked wilder and fiercer and more hairy than its neighbor, and Hans prayed each half-hour of the long day for his deliverance from such surroundings. However, it is a long lane that has no turning, and by the evening of the second day after his arrival, Hans's really musical ear had agreed that that sorely handled piano was at last in tune, "Al ze strrings," and on the strength of his white blood the officers asked the good Hans to dine in mess with them. Under the flow of strong mulled beer and glowing logs "William" unbent and cheered up, and even remembered how he once had been a soldier, a private in the artillery of the Guard, if you please (and very much his sloppy nature had hated it!). He had grown quite enthusiastic at the toast of "The King," and even felt himself the brother-in-arms. After dinner he had sung a song, too,

"Das Lied vom Wein ist leisht und klein  
Und flöszt euch Lust zum Trinken ein,"

and had been voted quite a good sort of bird. Branson himself had promised to see him on his way down the pass to-morrow, as he was going on an inspection, and his escort would do for both, since economy in escorts is a prime consideration. As Hans was nervous, he should be lent Branson's sporting mauser as a tribute to his nationality.

So down the pass the next day went Hans Breitman, thanking his stars that he had seen the last of wildman-land, seated in the Levy *tonga*, clutching the mauser carbine and sucking at a bubbly pipe. Branson sat in front, a pistol by his side and four mounted troopers cantering adjacent, who were changed every eight

miles by fresh men on fresh horses. It is thus that the frontier officer has to make his rounds, a-*tonga* or a-horseback, a cockshy for the outlaw on the hill-tops. However, all went well enough that day, and the road was varied frequently with camel caravans of Ghilzal traders, babies and goats and Persian pussy-cats lashed a-top the humpy shaggy camels. But the sight of the hairy, well-armed men, and even their hairy camels, only increased Hans's desire for the open plains, and the reassurance of even a frontier railway. The *tonga* galloped steadily on, past olive and mimosa-planted shrine, and saturnine tribesmen, till the raw red stones and the palosin scrub gave way to broad corn-flats when the valley broadened. At last, late in the afternoon, they won through to a gentler valley and a vista of cultivated plains and homesteads. Five miles, however, from the outlet to the plains they came to the Levy post which men call Durraband, or the "closed door," and here Branson found some business with local tribesmen which would detain him, and Hans must either wait or go on alone. He could, of course, have the escort, but he must sit alone in the *tonga*. Hans, longing to be away, took the latter course, and in fifteen minutes had moved on, still grasping the trusty mauser. Branson was glad enough to see him go, for even ex-Prussian artillerymen were out of place on a frontier when trouble of some kind was about, and the news he had got at Durraband might mean anything. So Hans drove off into haze of the winter afternoon, and Branson set himself about his local business, which included unravelling, so far as might be, certain conflicting rumors of outlaws and their young village following being on the warpath.

But escape is not always to the swift, and just as Hans was con-



gratulating himself at getting out of the hills and reaching the border post held by a regular garrison of soldiers, twenty rifles and a dozen sabres, the whole complexion changed.

Outside the mud fort of Drenashta was a group of soldiers, villagers, and border police. In the midst of them stood a British officer of the cavalry regiment stationed in the big cantonment that lay fifteen miles or so inland. He had ridden out with half a dozen of his men to inspect the detachment in the post, and when he arrived there a message had come to say that there had been a raid by outlaws at a village near by. He had ridden over at once to find that the village shopkeeper had been left for dead, his shop looted, two village watchmen shot through both legs to teach them to resist, and the shopkeeper's wife carried off. As the shopkeeper would not show where his money was, the outlaws had gently roasted his legs for ten minutes or so, whipped his wife, and then stabbed the poor old man's ample paunch. Happily, however, some one had not taken it all lying down, for a patrol of border military police had come up in time at any rate to fire on the raiders moving off, and hang on to their coat-tails. Fortunately it had only just happened as Maitland the cavalry officer arrived, and there was still an off-chance of getting them. He had therefore galloped back to the post with the intention of turning out every man, locking up its gate and hurrying them off to block three or four adjacent small passes that the raiders would probably use. Just as this was being arranged, Hans in his *tonga* drove up. The accession of four troopers was hailed with delight. They must accompany the cavalry at once. What, demanded poor Hans, was he to do? The duffedar in charge of Hans, saluting him, suggested that the only

thing for the *captain* to do was to go too, and pointing to his mauser carbine remarked that it was just the thing. It was also explained to Hans that he could not well wait alone in the post, as it was to be abandoned, and that it would not be at all safe for him to drive on alone. It has been mentioned that Hans, like all his compatriots, had some military experience hidden behind that very unmilitary exterior; and how beer and surroundings the night before had stirred it. To be saluted and called captain by a non-commissioned officer—how he had hated all such when he was soldiering in Metz—completed the awakening of ardor. Rather than be left alone in an empty mud fort, or be driven unprotected through fifteen miles of borderland, he would go with the English officer. Maitland, who was highly amused, but had little time to enjoy it, patted him on the back, and said he was a stout fellow. So ten minutes after arrival Hans found himself on the *doctor babujee's*<sup>2</sup> *tat*, ambling alongside Maitland. Just, however, as the parties were about to turn off to the various *darras* in the foothills that they were to watch, a messenger came from the border military police party. He said that the party had come up with the raiders, who had shut themselves up in a small mosque at the opening of the Tor-darra. From this they were firing at all and sundry, but the border police said they could hold them as long as daylight lasted. Now the Tor-darra was but two miles off. Maitland considered the proposition, and decided to send all his party there at once.

"We may want a mountain-gun to get those swine out of that. . . . I must send in to let them know in the cantonment. There is a telegraph office or a telephone at Palunda. Here, jemadar *sahib*, give me a

<sup>2</sup> The native apothecary's pony.

trooper to take a message to Palunda." And the party halted for a moment while a message was written out, asking for fifty more men, and a gun to be brought out in a *tonga*, in case the situation could not be tackled with the men at his disposal. Maitland and the cavalry then cantered off, and the infantry with *captain* Hans followed in their wake. It took the best part of half an hour for even the cavalry to get to their destination. The ground was cut up with the deepish irrigation cuts that lead the salt-impregnated water from the *darra* down to numerous wheat-fields. The mounds of an old Græco-Bactrian town also impeded them, but as they drew near the foothills the "pock" of dropping rifle-fire came down on the breeze. That was satisfactory; it showed that the outlaws were still there. A man of the police was waiting for them, and could not conceal his delight at the arrival of a *sahib*. At the most, they had hoped for the Indian troopers from the post. He eagerly described the situation. The outlaws had got into the mosque, but finding themselves trapped, had attempted to get out. Some had got up a narrow gorge at the back, from which, however, there was no exit except by overhand climbing, but three or four were still in the mosque. The police *jemadar* and eight of his men had gone after them merely to keep them there. Four of the men were lying down a hundred yards from the door of the mosque, behind some tombs, to prevent the three inside getting out. Oh yes, one or two of the police had been hit; he thought Mustapha Khan Bhatanni had been killed. "By Jove," exclaimed Maitland, "these old 'Barder' have done jolly well; but I haven't yet heard who it is that's leading the raiders." Turning

to the policeman, he said, "Who is it that you've got?"

"*Sahib*, the villagers all say it's Lal Khan."

"What! Lal Khan Jowaki?"

"The same, *sahib*."

"Phe-e-ew! No wonder you are hanging on to his tail like this, though you are brave men. Why, every jack man of you will be promoted. There is a big reward, too."

"Rs. 10,000, *sahib*, by your honor's kindness."

"Oh, well, we must help you get it. Here, *jemadar sahib*, leave four men here with these policemen. They are to get in as near that mosque as possible, and take care they don't get shot. There are three *mafrus*<sup>3</sup> in there."

And then Maitland dismounted his men, sent the horses into a small walled orchard, and hurried on with the policeman to the rift in the hills where the outlaws were said to be. A fairly sharp fire was in progress. Maitland found the *jemadar* with half a dozen men at the mouth of the cleft, a curious rift into the rock of the hillside. They were lying down firing vigorously, and said that the outlaws had been trying to come out. A couple of the men were wounded, but not seriously, though farther back under a rock lay police-lad Mustapha Khan dead, as the policeman had said. The native officer of the "Barden" said he had four men at the top of the creek in charge of a man who had been born near, and who had said that there was practically no way out. Any news of the woman they had carried off? Oh yes, she was left away back on the fields with her nose cut off. Then a great anger seized Maitland's heart, with an intense desire to finish off Lal Khan and his following, so that they should harry the border-side no more. He sent half of his

<sup>3</sup> The "Barder." Native name for the Border Military Police.

<sup>4</sup> Outlaws.

men to the head of the cleft, and left half with the police *jemadar* at the opening, for it was more than probable that the outlaws might try to rush out, as the far end had probably been found impracticable. That being for the moment secure, Maitland then went back to meet the small party of infantry, who were following with Hans close on the heels of the cavalry. He found them coming up to the mosque, and was able to withdraw the four men he had left, leaving the police and half a dozen rifles watching the door and back of the mosque, lest the outlaws should burrow under the wall. With the remainder, including Hans, he returned once more to the cleft. The outlaws had not been inactive. Feeling the net closing on them, they had made a rush to the opening of the cleft after a few minutes of rapid fire, in which two of Maitland's own men had been hit, and had then retired again. Three of the troopers had tried to follow them up the cleft, but had met too hot a fire. The noise had been considerable, as the rifle-shots reverberated from the conglomerate cliffs. The first thing to do was to double close the opening. Already the men there were piling up a stone wall as best they could under cover. Maitland put all his newcomers on to help at this, and to drag the dried mimosa-thorn from the edge of a small patch of buckwheat, and throw it on the other side of their wall as an obstacle. The infantry *jemadar*, with the police, were then left at the cleft. The remainder of the force, some twenty troopers and half a dozen of the "Barder," he ranged out in pairs round the cleft on both sides, the said ravine being apparently a hundred yards long. Maitland himself took up a position about the middle of one of the sides.

It was now dark, and there was every prospect of a long cold night,

with the possibility of the outlaws escaping. The man who knew the place then came and whispered that there was little cover down below, and that were it not for the dark the men would all, or nearly all, be visible from above. The thorn all round, he said, was now dry, and exceedingly inflammable. Let it be cut and lighted and thrown down, and let each pair of men round the edge do this. Then there would be light enough to shoot the outlaws by. The plan was a good one. There was, after all, likely to be vengeance on these cruel wolfheads for whose death the whole countryside cried aloud.

Maitland sent the order round, and in ten minutes launched a mass of burning thorn rolling over the side of the cliff. On all sides a similar phenomenon. The whole gully was illuminated, and some of the men below could be seen hurrying to find shelter. For the moment the laugh was certainly on the side of the assailants. Those watching above fired rapidly at the scurrying illuminated figures below, and certainly one bullet found an avenging billet. The scene was a dramatic one, worthy of being portrayed. It was now quite dark, and round this crevasse clustered unseen the little knots of Maitland's men. The higher hills round stood out clear-cut against the sky, and the stars shone out on the frosty night. Rigel and Betelgeux flickered across to Gemini and the Great Square, and the outlaws lay doggo in the deep gloom below. Then the happy thought of the local man, the sudden lighting of thorn-bush bundles, rolled flaming down the sides of the cliffs, till its rugged plum-pudding sides shone red in their conglomerate layers, and the heads of troopers lit up round the edge! To crackling of thorns was added the crack of rifles and the curses from the desperadoes below.

And above it all rose an order from Maitland to shoot carefully and finish it off. Then as the thorn-bushes burnt out there ensued a thrice-thickened darkness and a tense silence. Below, near the mosque, an occasional rifle-shot rang out, more as a sign that all was well than a definite attempt to break into that solid building.

Hans, in charge of a man of his own escort, lay close behind Maitland, grasping his carbine, and resigned to any happening. Again the thorns were lit and hurled below with a fresh volley as the cleft lit up, and another raider was declared hit. But the race is not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong. Between the fires men were rolling down boulders and preparing for a third and bigger conflagration. But by this time some at least of the outlaws had ensconced themselves under cover. For the third time the flaming bundles were thrown down, and the avenging figure of Maitland stood up the better to direct affairs. Three rifle-shots from below rang out, and the British officer pitched backward. He fell into the arms of his orderly, an old Dogra of many years' service. "Bring a light," he murmured; "I must write to the *memsahib*." But the old orderly demurred.

"Nay, *sahib*. Nay. They know where we are now; if you light a light you will be hit again. Better wait a bit, *sahib*."

"*Atchcha*," murmured the wounded officer, "never mind, *memsahib ko salaam do*," and died with never a word more.

Through all India the pathos of the story has gone, as told by the old orderly. Just how the *sahib* had said, "Never mind, give my greeting to my wife," and had then and there died. The thought of the wife fifteen miles off in the cantonment, meeting perhaps next day a *tonga* with a corpse

in lieu of a living husband, and the simple story of Khajoor Singh, the orderly! It has brought tears to every *memsahib's* eye and many a *sahib's* too. There is an old Punjab saying which says—

"War should be made by men without wives,

Bangles ring softly and sadly."

Khajoor Singh turned to Hans and said, "The *sahib* is dead, will the *Captain* give orders." Hans knew little enough of the vernacular, but the purport of words was clear to him. He, the only white man, was by force of color in command! He, a good German, in command of English troops! Many things passed through that usually, slow-moving mind, and there came a story of his youth of how a great-uncle had fought for the English at Waterloo with Kielmansegge. He, too, would do the same. It was evident that there was not much to do but continue the process. Hans's limited command of Hindustani would only run to one word, "*Maro*," meaning "Shoot," or "Strike." "*Maro*," he repeated, "*Maro*!"

Now Khajoor Singh had seen something of war. It would be well not to say anything about Maitland's death yet awhile, and as there was a real white man present, he would do as well. So he called out: "The *sahib's* orders are to go on with it. Let the light and the fire be continuous. Let half throw at one time and the other half be ready as soon as the light dies down." And it was so, and the gully re-echoed with the rolling musketry while the number of rifles replying grew less.

Down by the stone wall and thorn fence at the cleft the *jemadar* of infantry was in command, a stout Muhammadan of a fighting Rajpoot clan. When he saw the burning bushes falling over he was delighted, and was

able to get in some volleys himself. By the light he could see thirty or forty yards up an earthen dam, used no doubt to store rain-water. He saw that the ground was clear up to it, and determined to close up. This he did at the third conflagration, and at the next was able to shoot three of the raiders. By this time some dry grass down below had got alight and there was a permanent glare. A man was then sent up to say that the men above should shoot no more, and he would finish it, which he did.

Up above Hans himself had started firing with his mauser, and the battle-lust had seized him. Twice had an outlaw's bullet rapped against the rock close to him, and he had replied with a whole clip at the spot whence the shot came. When the message from below arrived he was quite beside himself, so that Khajoor Singh took the carbine from him as a nurse from a child. Down below the *jemadar* was finishing up the business, which consisted of giving the *coup-de-grâce* to two who fought on, and of binding one wounded man who offered no resistance. The fire below was kept alight while the cleft was searched thoroughly, and ten bodies and a wounded prisoner were collected.

Now that the fight was over, reinforcements were coming up. The first to arrive was Branson, with all the men he could muster. The news had come to him five miles up the pass a couple of hours ago. Riding down to the plain *quam colerrime*, he had seen the blazing bushes and heard the rifle-shots. At the mosque he had been directed to the cleft, and arrived in time to find the *jemadar* in possession. Just as he rode up the message from above had come down to say that Maitland *sahib* had been killed, and that the *Captain* was in command.

"What *Captain*?" demanded Branson.

"I don't know what *Captain*," replied the *jemadar*. "He may be a barrack-master *sahib* [road engineer] or *naksha wallah* [survey]; he was with Maitland *sahib*, and had ridden the doctor *babujee's* pony. Stay! he had heard some one say that it was a music *sahib*, and had come in a *tonga*."

"Heavens!" exclaimed Branson, "it can never be poor old man Hans! Anyway, I must go to the top. Get your men together now, and get the police to collect the bodies. They must go into Palunda for the magistrate to see."

And then Branson rode up to the height above to find poor Maitland's body and a half-hysterical elated piano-tuner, who burst into tears when he saw the Englishman. But Branson was a man of some perception, and he put his hands on the other's shoulder, saying—

"My dear old piano-tuner, well done! gallantly done!" and he gripped his hand. Then turning to the men round he said, "This *sahib* is a very distinguished *sahib*, but is not a *jangi*<sup>s</sup> *sahib* at all; but, as you see, has helped you out of trouble when your own *sahib* was killed."

And it was quite true. That one word *Maro* from the tuner had kept up the continuity of command, and of the action that had held the raiders engaged while the party below closed in. Hans's simple heart had been touched with glory for one brief quarter of an hour, and the Kings of Orion had entered in.

There is little more to tell. The troops assembled and bivouacked for the night, leaving a strong guard on the mosque. During the night more men arrived from the distant cantonment, bringing a mountain-gun in a *tonga* with another one full of ammunition behind. At daybreak the

<sup>s</sup> Military.



mosque was battered in, and three shell-mangled corpses extracted. It was ruthless enough; but there was no ruth in the raiders, who would have taken more life had any other method of attack been adopted. As it was, besides Maitland, there were three of our men dead and four wounded. Happily, however, the bodies of thirteen of the outlaws—including the notorious Lal Khan—were laid out for the coroner's inquest at Palunda, which solemnly sat to say how those shell-battered and other corpses came by their death.

Hans himself drove off from the uncongenial scene next morning, and with him Khajoor Singh, to give with an aching heart that last *salaam* to the stricken *memsahib* and the small son, who, dressed as a trooper in his father's regiment, awaited his return at the garden gate.

As for Hans, he wanted only to es-

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cape quietly to Lahore, but before long there came a grant that enabled him to achieve the wish of his heart and set up a music depot of his own, with a certain Swiss roll of a nurse installed as its mistress. And there were present at the wedding the Officers of the Levy, the Deputy Commissioner, and the great German Consul-General himself, while among the presents was a silver coffee-pot inscribed, "Hans Breitman, from the Viceroy."

But while fortune came with both hands full to the piano-tuner, which no one grudged him, a sad widow hugged a small son on an Ellerman liner, to be haunted for many years with that simple sad farewell, "*Memsahib ko salaam do,*" from the man that died for the peace of the border. But "They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels."

## TWO BIRD WATCHERS IN THULE.

North of Benbecula Ford, but something south of Harris, lies the island of Kirkibost, torn by the Atlantic storms, as it were, from the ribs of the Outer Hebrides. On the map of Scotland it appears as a mere dot: even the Ordnance Survey topographers have only allowed it a meagre quarter of an inch, and to human knowledge nothing of any importance whatever has happened there.

That is why we went there, Hur and I. We wished to find some place in the Outer Islands, or in the dependencies thereof, which had no history: some place where we need not go out to see the local house wherein Prince Charlie is reported to have slept, nor walk along the road by which Flora Macdonald travelled. Being two real idlers, we desired a place

where there was not even a cromlech, or a "Druid's ring," whose history we should feel it our duty to study; and looking westwards one evening, when the tide was low, we saw the dunes of Kirkibost, like the Land of Atlantis, lying in a sunset mist.

"Kirkibost," said our landlady contemptuously. "It's a verra lonesome wee place, and there is naething for a body to see in it."

That settled it. "We will go there to-morrow," we said.

Kirkibost lies at the edge of the world, but we went there at the end of May, and we thought that if the edge of the world were so fair, that the hub must surely be axled in Heaven. For there was blue sky over the zenith—earnest of sunshine inland, for all that the roystering wind drove a sea-

mist over the dunes: the air was full of the glad voices of innumerable birds: and it was the season for the flowering of the sea-thrift, and as far as the eye could see, each creek and inlet and sandy spit was tinged blush-pink with bloom. Half a mile away, on the other side of the island, we could hear the boom of the Atlantic rollers as they toppled and crashed on the beaches. For centuries the wind and wave wrestled together along the shore for the possession of the sand, the one heaping it up, and the other washing it down, until at last the hardy marram grass stepped in, and bound the treacherous shifting hillocks into a strong wall against them. Only the sun and the wind go there now—and the birds whose way is the wind's way.

Kirkibost belongs entirely to the birds. It is their half-way house when the autumn equinox drives them across the Atlantic and into the south country in thousands. Its dunes are the first land that they sight after leaving Iceland, unless you reckon the great crags of Haskeir Aachen, which rise up out of the sea like five wicked fingers, fifteen miles to northward. And in the same way, in the spring time, its hospitable beaches are thronged with pilgrims—swans, ducks, and waders—all bound for the far north.

Besides these, however, Kirkibost is full of resident birds of its own. In the centre of the island there was a wide swampy meadow where a hundred shaggy Highland cattle were grazing as we passed. The water, which even the eternal sea wind could not dry, was drained away down little trenches as off a Dutch polder, and the grass was almost crowded out by the biggest dandelions that we had ever seen. Here we saw innumerable dunlins who tripped before us through the herbage. It was the love season, and the dunlin when he goes a-court-

ing is a merry wight. The air was filled with his gay shrill call, as he rattled past us down the meadow, and alighted by the mate of his choice, with his long silvery wings quivering aloft for a moment as though they belonged to an angel out of one of Gustav Doré's pictures. In the winter, the dunlin only allows you to make his intimate acquaintance through binoculars, as he bustles over the sandflats of the south. But in May, like so many of the waders, he loses all wariness, and becomes a longing love-lorn dolt, who cares for nothing but his amours and how to display his summer waistcoat of soot and silver to best advantage before his enslaver. While pursuing her, he is indifferent to anything else, and will blunder so close to your foot that you may almost take him unawares in a butterfly net. It seems as though the awakening of the life of the next generation that is in him has power to fill the bird with so great an ecstasy that he is lifted above such common things as self-preservation and the desire for food, which are the mainspring of his actions throughout the rest of the year, and for a few days he lives entirely with his mate in Eden. Later, when love-making is over, the dunlin in some measure loses his sublime confidence that nobody will hurt him and fusses anxiously round any intruder on his nesting-ground, piping plaintively for his four bonny eggs among the grass.

A score of peewits nested in the meadow, and swooped and sorrowed at our coming. Less noisy, but no less anxious, the ringed plovers malingered at our feet to lead us from their hidden nurseries. A hundred skylarks jubilated overhead; somewhere close at hand a corncrake rasped monotonously to his love; and gulls passed and repassed, rising and falling as they chased their own shadows over the

dunes. To us, newly arrived from the locks and pent hags of the mainland, where a man may walk for half a day and see nothing but a few ducks and gulls, and a meadow pipit or two, the stir and clamor of so much bird life was almost overwhelming. In the midst of it all, however, we found a solitary gray plover, a pathetic figure, who stood huddled up on a tussock by a pool. By what accident he had wandered so many hundreds of miles away from his own country, and on that May day found himself upon a sunny Hebridean sandbank instead of in his native tundra, I know not. At this season, all the Arctic travellers should have returned long ago to their polar nesting-grounds. Yet here was this lost bird, as lonely as Crusoe among the savages; and he had put on his wedding suit of dandy black and white, although, had we not passed by that way, there would have been no one to admire it.

Heterodox though it may be, I confess that the wanderings of these aberrant individual birds really fascinate me more than does the study of the great regular migrations. After all, when all the circumstances and conditions are analyzed, it is not really more wonderful, philosophically, at any rate, that a bird should fly every year from Siberia to Britain and back again than that Brown of Ealing should go by train to his office each day, with the reasonable expectation of returning home safely and punctually each night. We are not really interested in Brown except as a type. But if, for no apparent reason, he refused to avail himself of his return ticket one evening, and henceforth earned his living by carrying sandwich-boards up and down Piccadilly, we should at once take a quickened interest in him, and wonder what the cause of his conduct might be. Thus with birds, although I am properly in-

terested to learn that there is a regular migration of red-breasts between this country and the Continent, I like better that story told, on I forgot whose authority, of the black-browed albatross from the south seas, who lived for years on Myggaenaes Holm in the Faroe Islands alone with the gannets. It brings you at once from the general to the particular, and we are all too prone to generalize about wild life. I wonder where that albatross came from, and what accident made him settle so far north of the Line, and whether he was content with his solitary life in Thule; and now I wonder whether my sober gray plover among the dandelions was just such another exile. At least the lines fell to him in pleasant places there in Kirkibost. We wished him a safe journey back to his native Petchora, and so passed on.

To the south the meadow-land gave place to the open dunes which bounded the mouth of the estuary. The wind whipped the crests of the waves to foam, and over the foreshore flew a flock of terns. Their voices, heard above the splash of the sea, were gay and careless as the wind, as one by one they hovered like great white butterflies, and then dropped plumb into the water. Presently an arctic skua, one of the dark bird pirates of the northern seaboard, made a raid on the terns' fishing-party, and, being likewise "clipper-built," was able to harry them grievously. There was one tern—a "grass widower" for the time being—who flew backwards and forwards between the sea and the shore with small offerings of sprats and sand-eels for his mate, who brooded over her three marbled eggs up among the sandhills. The skua singled out this bird, and attacked him so savagely that, double and scream as he would, the tern could not escape until he had dropped his fish, which was immedi-

ately snatched up by the robber. This happened twice, and the tern, who was but half the size of his assailant, could only shriek impotent maledictions and return to his fruitless fishing. The third time, however, he was more wary, and made a long détour over the foreshore. He had almost reached the edge of the dunes, when the skua caught sight of him and immediately gave chase. The victim had a good start, however, and before the robber realized where he was he had blundered in among the terns' nurseries. Now the tern, especially the arctic tern, is of choleric and undaunted spirit. You may often see him angry: you will never see him frightened. At the sight of the buccaneer so close to his nest, the tern screamed with wrath, and rounding at once on his pursuer, gave him a thorough trouncing. The next minute the skua was flying for his life back to the sea, with half a dozen white-winged furies shrieking behind him, like (if the simile may find place) a flock of Ariels chasing some dark and sinister Caliban.

Out here, on the open dunes, we found a twite's nest built under a tuft of grass. The eggs were newly laid—indeed the last could not have been in the nest above an hour—and evidently the hen bird was still in love with their novelty. As soon as we had discreetly withdrawn behind a neighboring sandhill, she hurried back at once, and rearranged them admiringly. Her mate, who accompanied her, seemed to think she was exposing herself to unnecessary risk, for any one less blind than a proud mother might have seen two pairs of human eyes peering over the marram bents, or else he was vexed that their courting was over, and that he must now come second in her solicitude. He fidged round the nest, and chirped fretfully, until, to humor him, she

got up and joined him. Then he was quite content, and the pair of them flew off, rising and dipping like two shuttlecocks in the wind. But she could not rest away from her eggs, and very soon, twittering a pretty apology for her seeming neglect of him, she was back at the nest to admire them.

This little comedy was played over and over again, and when I rose to go, Hur, in the spirit of the true idler, preferred to lie where she was and watch the twites' sweethearting. So I left her, and went on over the dunes, which the wind and the rain have carved into all sorts of bluff and grotesque shapes. There were no birds to be seen there, nor any living thing at all, except a little sad-colored beetle whose name I do not know. His footprints made a little wavy track for twenty yards or more among the marram tussocks, and he walked very slowly as if he found it hard work to claw his way up the sandbanks. Twenty yards must have been a whole day's journey for him at that pace, over a desert apparently as limitless as the Sahara. Nevertheless, when I released him, he set off again doggedly over the hot dry sand. So I felicitated him on his stout heart, and passed over to the edge of the dunes, from whence, looking westward, a man could see the tremendous arc of the Atlantic skyline.

Gazing hence we see the water that grows iron round the Pole,  
From the shore that hath no shore beyond it set in all the sea.

These are the loneliest waters. From week's end to week's end there is no sail to be seen upon them. In the west, the Monach Islands, dim as O'Brazill in the mist, lie along the horizon, and to the north, eagle's eyes might see St. Kilda and the great attendant stack of Borreray. Otherwise the nearest land is Amer-

ica, or Iceland—or, may be, Atlantis.

I have sometimes wondered wherein the magic of the Atlantic lies—a magic exceeding that of the rest of the five seas. It has a terrible charm all its own. If, as legends say, the spirits of the dead linger round the places that they loved when in the flesh, not only would the waters of old Atlantic be thronged with phantoms of ancient shipping and ghosts of bygone navigators, but its shores would be filled with the wraiths of all the dreamers who have watched the sun dip below that immense horizon, and pondered how they might follow it. Thus, it was over the Atlantic that Columbus peered, looking for new worlds, from the dunes of Spain; and the navies of Phœnicia sailed into the same waters from between the Pillars of Hercules. A thousand years ago, the Norsemen dared these very shoals of Kirkibost, uncharted as they were; and before the beginning of history, the same spell that bound all these, compelled the first explorers, beetle-browed and hairy jerkined, to launch their catamarans, and sail westwards towards the mountains of Thule—the spell of the Atlantic.

The tide was rolling in fast over the long dun beaches, and tumbling in a smother of foam over the sandy bar at the mouth of the estuary. Looking idly across the tormented shoals, I saw a great northern diver fishing in the smooth water inshore.

I think that if I believed in the transmigration of souls, and wishes might find place, I should choose to become a great northern diver. Of all living things he seems to dwell most aloof from man, a being whose life is passed with the winds and waves in desolate and solitary places. Hitherto our sole acquaintance with him had been made through a certain woodcut in a well-thumbed book of birds, in which he sat upon a rock

among the driving spray, with a stormy sea leaping up below. As children will, we built a whole wealth of romance about this bird, and to this day I remember that the book is prone to fall open by hazard at the picture. Even the Latin name printed at the head of the page was attractive to us. That we did not understand it was no matter. It rolled off the tongue grandly enough, and seemed to carry some suggestion of those regions, where

The Northern Ocean in vast whirls  
Boils round the naked melancholy  
Isles

Of furthest Thule, and the Atlantic  
surge

Pours in among the stormy Hebrides.

Now, when the diver was swimming before me at last, there seemed something incongruous in this setting of calm bright water and yellow sand for a bird whom we had always pictured as careering through driving spray over stormy polar seas. He paddled lazily across the field of my binoculars, with the sunshine gleaming on his glossy neck, and preened himself for all the world like an old mallard in a dyke. It was a rare treat to have a glimpse of so wary and beautiful a bird at such close quarters, and like all such glimpses it only lasted for a moment. The divers must have an especial guardian angel, or perhaps a sixth sense which tells them when they are watched, for, still as I lay among the sandhills, this bird saw me and began to swim seawards. At the bar of the estuary the waves rose up as sheer walls of water six feet high. He floated straight up the shining slopes until the crest of the comber arched above his head, whereupon he dived through it with the trough on the other side. For a long time I watched him swim thus, sometimes over, and sometimes under, the breakers, but always heading out to



wards the open sea, until at length the surf was passed, and he was riding—a mere spot in the distance—where he knew no man could reach him, out on the smooth heaving breast of the Atlantic.

I rejoined Hur, who was still stretched on the hot sand with her cap pushed over her eyes; and we lay and basked in the sun, and watched the birds—plover, dunlin, larks, and terns—all making the best of the good May weather, and courting, playing, feeding, and fighting with one another in those few square acres of dandelions and marram grass. When the sun was so near its setting that the shadow of the short northern night already hung over the hills, we went

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down to the ferry. Behind us, in the twilight, the peewits wailed over the pastures, and joyous dunlin still intent on their nuptials ran before us down the creeks. A dozen bachelor oyster-catchers rose from a sandy spit, and whirled away over the estuary with a flicker of pied wings; and a pair of elder ducks flew across the rising moon. The tide was at the ebb, and a hundred birds—ducks, geese, and waders—paddled diligently over the wet sands. Their voices, softened by distance, came jointly to us over the water, and a flock of whimbrel, calling to one another as they passed overhead, sounded the day's "Last Post."

*M. D. Haviland.*

## NOTES ON RECENT BOOKS BY THEIR WRITERS.\*

It is now a well-known fact that Sir Walter Scott was, on one occasion, his own reviewer, and that in that review are to be found most valuable criticisms of his work. As a rule, in the midst of much activity on the part of critics the author alone is silent. He may agree with their strictures, and in that case he would often like to say that he is of the same opinion, or he may feel that amidst great praise there is a lack of real understanding of his aims. To the public it is surely most valuable to obtain from the authors of books that have aroused general interest their own last word on the subject.

*Editor, Dublin Review.*

I suppose every writer has in his mind a theme quite distinct from the actual plot of his novel. His plot may

\* "Notwithstanding." By Mary Cholmondeley. "Horace Blake." By Mrs. Wilfrid Ward. "Gracechurch." By John Ayasough. "Water-springs." By A. C. Benson. "Come Back! Come Rope!" and "An Average Man." By Robert Hugh Benson. "Magic." By G. K. Chesterton.

be good or bad, dramatic or melodramatic, but it is not of first importance. It is the scaffolding in which and by means of which the central idea is developed.

It is a little disappointing when a book is judged without reference to its central idea, for it proves either that the reviewer has not given an intelligent attention, or that the writer has not made his meaning sufficiently clear.

In *Prisoners* the theme of the book was the very old one, that in life the affections are everything and that egotism—not hate—is the opposite of love.

Truths such as these are of the nature of platitudes. I suppose a platitude to be a universally acknowledged truth with the vain repetition of which we are all so bored that no one pays any further attention to it beyond avoiding the enunciator.

But if, instead of enunciating it, the preacher set about practising it in si-

lence then its enormous power for good would be felt and recognized once more. So in a book it is no kind of use my saying, however emphatically, that the life of the affections is everything. I might as well "hold my noise," as my old nurse used to say. But if I can describe (without twisting it to meet my requirements) a piece of life which exemplifies this truth, and life is always exemplifying truth in some form, then I have succeeded in expressing what I set out to express.

In *Prisoners* I endeavored to show the effect of love on two narrow-minded egoists who eventually marry. The weak, silly, cowardly Fay, and the old-maidish, priggish, middle-aged Wentworth, to whom nothing had ever happened, were not lovers from whom I could expect great things. But the dawning in their hearts of even a feeble affection, and they were neither of them capable of anything but a feeble affection, made them gradually more alive, more vulnerable to happiness, more capable of receiving it. Even the crudely sensual Lord Lossiemouth has a flash of perception of what love is, and of the aridity of his life without it, and turns, in middle age, on a sudden impulse (which we must hope he did not regret) to the woman whom he had forsaken in his youth.

It has always seemed to me absorbingly interesting to describe mediocre people such as these, and to watch them "muddle through" their difficulties. The upright prig who cannot rise to magnanimity, the harmless little woman who cannot be quite honest—these are the people whom I care to draw.

No reviewer has touched on the theme of *Notwithstanding*. My endeavor, of course, was to show that truth and uprightness are an immense strength even when they are not allied to intelligence. I tried to

describe how a dull woman can blunder out of an extremely awkward situation by sheer uprightness. I endow my slow-witted Annette with an astute worldly-wise friend, Mrs. Stoddart, who sedulously endeavors to save her from the consequences of an act of supreme folly. But Annette will not be saved. She gives herself away on the first opportunity and repeats the damaging circumstances, not to the wise and kindly elder man, Mr. Stirling, who admired her, and was capable of acting with magnanimity towards her, but to a stolid young land agent, as dull and upright as herself, who was thinking of marrying her. He does not rise to the occasion. How could he? He believes the worst at once. He naturally would. At this juncture I call in another narrow-minded, upright, dull young woman, who also believes the worst at once, also in love with the stolid and upright land agent, to help to set matters right.

Three stupid people involved in the meshes of a serious predicament is an interesting problem. How will they get out of it? It was their intrinsic honesty and sheer uprightness and nothing else which restored the lovers to each other. I am not now speaking of the scaffolding of the story, of my melodramatic incident of the burnt will, but of how these three people acted and re-acted on each other, while the astute middle-aged Mrs. Stoddart, and the admirable, sagacious Mr. Stirling, both anxious to assist Annette, hovered impotently on the fringe of the situation, and could achieve next to nothing. What pleasure it would have given me if any of my many reviewers had commented on my problem and its solution!

Mary Cholmondeley.

Horace Blake is more sharply divided into two parts than is usual or

desirable. The first part is intended to give as objectively as possible the narrative of the phenomena of what is called a "sudden conversion." The second half introduces the question of the duties and difficulties of a biographer. The style and treatment of the two parts is different, and in spite of obvious objections I think that the difference ought to have been still more marked. The story of Blake's illness might have been told yet more simply, more objectively. Then in the second half of *Horace Blake* there might have been more reflections of his personality from the mirrors of other men's minds. It is to the impressions left on such an onlooker and enemy as the old don, Edward Hales, that the second half owes its vitality and might have owed still more.

It is a great risk in any book to assert that a man is a genius, and in *Horace Blake* the genius is simply postulated from the first. He arrives on the scene dying and it is postulated of him that he was very great and very bad. In the plain tale of his last illness and conversion there was not sufficient opportunity to prove his greatness or his wickedness. That had to be shown after death. In fact the whole history previous to his illness has to be learnt by following the tracks of his biographer. If Blake had not been very great the biography and, consequently, the second half of the book would not have been of any importance and all the characters must have lost in significance. I do not think he would have been more convincing if he had been described as middling great.

Horace Blake was very bad. If he had not been very bad the point of the book would have been missed, namely, the overwhelming mystery of the gospels, the forgiveness of any and every sin. But I am inclined to think that in my anxiety to make him bad

enough I strained a little beyond the mark. It would have been more living if Blake had had even some travesty of a virtue, if, for instance, he had done occasional acts of liberality (not, of course, towards his creditors) or if he had shown some sense of honor among thieves, or any other habit or quality, not intellectual, on which a bad man generally piques himself.

After the attempt to see Blake through the eyes of those who had known him there had to follow his vindication of the one thing in which those survivors judged him unjustly, that was the reality of his conversion. The time-honored device of the discovery of the notebook was a counsel of despair, a garrulous ghost was the only alternative. It was not possible to fall back on the *abbé's* testimony because that would never have convinced Kate Blake. For that conquest Horace himself had to have the last word. Kate had been brought up in a school that looked for truth to facts and facts alone. Blake wanted to show her, however much it cost himself, that the phenomena of conversion are facts that must be accepted as well as any others. By the almost scientific analysis of what he had passed through he convinced Kate of its reality. With all its faults what is written in the poor little *cahier* is a true cry of human pain and love, and the expression of that deep longing to understand the spiritual which has a pathos of its own.

Horace Blake, in this review, takes, as he always did, the lion's share. As to the other characters, Stephen Tempest is fairly true, but thin. Edward Hales is a good rough outline, and, personally, I find the batch of Breton priests and the sacristan at St. Jean des Pluies a relief in the general gloom.

You never know what women will

do in a book. I thought Kate Blake would be hard, bitter, vehement and arid throughout, but she developed large qualities out of the great virtue of forgiveness. It is a mystery to our ignorance that if she had not forgiven Blake she might have been saved from much of his influence. Stephen thought that she did not mind Blake's badness; he was wrong. What she had said, and in a temper, by the way, was that she did not mind if the world thought him bad. Trix started well and went well for a good time, but she was gradually sacrificed to the greater claims of Kate's personality. That was an unexpected and unwelcome development.

But if I had remembered the "Bab Ballads" and "lost Mr. Blake [who] was a regular out-and-out hardened old sinner," I would have christened my dying dramatist otherwise.

Josephine Ward.

There must be a portion of the public by whom John Ayscough's works are read, since he has published a dozen or so within the last six years; and, by those who liked them, *Gracechurch* will also be liked, for it is full of his peculiar qualities, though it does not particularly resemble any previous book of his. It is not pure romance, like *Dromina* or *Hurdcott*; or historic romance, like *San Celestino*; or a Sicilian romance, like *Marotz*; or a truss of essays, like *Leria Pondera*; and those who prefer Mr. Ayscough on his high horse may not at first approve of him ambling familiarly afoot, as he permits himself to be seen in *Gracechurch*. But by certain newspapers, experts in that branch of literary criticism, *Gracechurch* is already tenderly alluded to as one of the "sellers" of the year, so that it may turn out that its unlikeness to its predecessors may really secure for it a greater popularity, and gain a new

"public" for its author. Should that prove to be the case the fact might well convey a lesson to Mr. Ayscough—the simple one that library-subscribers like books with names they know how to pronounce: it is disconcerting to have to ask for a work whose title sticks in one's teeth. And English readers do not care much for "foreign" stories—unless, indeed, the scene be laid in some almost unheard-of surroundings: a Chinese novel, now, or a Tibetan play; if Mr. Ayscough saw his way to gratify the public with something of that sort (only for once: London would not care for two Chinese romances, in successive years, or for a cycle of Tibetan comedies) he might use any title he liked, for one would merely ask the librarians if they had "Ayscough's Chinese novel" without the slightest necessity for pronouncing the name. Anyone can say "Gracechurch"—that, very probably, may be the primary reason for this book being more in demand at libraries than *San Celestino* or *Mezzogiorno*. And here we may as well hint to this writer that his first terrible mistake lay in the choice of his *nom-de-guerre*—why so uncouth and sneezy a name as Ayscough? We understand that there are five different ways of mispronouncing it, all in constant use, so that any reputation the author might have gained keeps oozing away by five distinct leaks, so to speak.

And *Gracechurch* not only has an English name, but it is all about England and English people. *Hurdcott* was an English name too (though many believed it to be Finnish), but most of the leading characters were foreigners, or of mixed descent, like an aeroplane accident or the late Lafcadio Hearn. *Gracechurch* is English to its backbone: there is not a foreigner in it, and its innumerable characters could exist nowhere out of England: it may well be popular

with a people sincerely, if silently, convinced of the superfluity of other countries. *Gracechurch* is homely, one can savor it without any knowledge of Italian or of history; and it is kind and good-natured, and we Britishers are more at home there than among the theological virtues; indeed, in this book, John Ayscough lets all his innate optimism out of the bag. And elderly English people (would that we were all as young as we look!) do love pathos: did not Dickens know it? and was not that great man perfectly aware that the majority of readers are turned of forty, in spite of anything census papers may say against it? Dickens, we have long heard with misgiving, wallowed naked in the pathetic; of course, no modern writer durst do that, but, in parts of *Gracechurch*, Mr. Ayscough keeps very little on—e.g., in the chapter called "Nandy's Child," which, for our part, we like as well as anything in the book.

Probably the "younger generation" (born elderly, which is not at all the same thing as being elderly in spite of ourselves) will not care much for *Gracechurch*; it says it cannot read Dickens, nor Thackeray, nor George Eliot, nor Mrs. Gaskell, so little Mr. Ayscough need not mind; the picture caught, as in a net, among all these chapters, each having a story of its own, can only appeal to those who know its truth and find in it an echo from a past all the dearer for its hopeless removal. The life of *Gracechurch* in the sixties was more different from the life of "Greater London" to-day, than its own life then was from what it had been under the Four Georges. If it was dull, then, John Ayscough has singularly glorified it, but it was quiet, orderly, unambitious, unfretful, leisurely (with ample time for the small charities that are one of the Holy Oils of life) nor discon-

tented, not greedy, and certainly not monotonous—as all Mr. Ayscough's crowd of infinitely varied Gracechurchians bear singular witness. Provincial it was, and the provincialism of the book may well account for its popularity, for there is much more Englishism in the towns whereof Gracechurch stands for type than in all London.

[John Ayscough.]

Robert Browning, in the only piece of prose which he deliberately wrote, a preface, I think, to some forged letters attributed to Shelley, said that a poet either began with an ethical idea, and formed a scene to illustrate it, or saw the scene first, and left the idea to look after itself. I do not know whether he was speaking autobiographically, or even whether it is a real distinction at all. But my book *Watersprings* belongs to the second of these processes.

The story all arose out of a house I saw in Wiltshire, in a hamlet half-hidden among the downs. The place dwelt very insistently in my mind, and then the central figure of my story, Howard Kennedy, walked on to the scene. The question then was, whom did he find in the house, and Mrs. Graves made her appearance; then Jack Sandys arrived, and after that the other figures came very briskly into view. After that there seemed no doubt at all about the matter; the groups formed themselves, made entrances and exits, talked and smiled. The end of the story was at first hidden in a luminous sort of mist; but by the time I began to write, it was all plain enough. I do not, to speak very frankly, feel that I created the story at all. It was a thing rather seen than made, and the people a great deal more actual to me than men with whom I have sat on Boards, or women whom I have taken in to



dinner. Then presently I had the curious sense, which I have had in writing certain other books, such as *Paul the Minstrel*, and particularly *The Child of the Dawn*, that I was not fashioning anything, but merely describing an affair that was really enacting itself, just so and not otherwise.

The book was written very quickly, day after day. I was staying in the country, and used to walk alone in the afternoons. At the start of my walk, I merely looked ahead, and saw the incidents shape themselves; and then put the whole out of my mind, though occasionally the characters chose to converse of their own accord; and when after tea I sat down to write, the thing spun off the reel without a hitch. I never reconstructed or rewrote anything, or introduced any incident subsequently; while the erasures and corrections were very few.

This being so, I find it as difficult to criticize the story as I should to criticize a country-house visit, or a day of my working life. My figures were not puppets, dancing to my order, but human beings, inconsequent and impulsive. They did not always behave as I expected or speak as I intended. One of my critics said that the fault of the book was that all the people in it had too comfortable a time and too large an income. I felt, when I read the words, how little he understood what had happened; the money was no affair of mine; those were the incomes they had! But I suppose that this all proves that the book is deficient in art, and that I did not control my material, but simply accepted it.

Of course, the idea which underlies the book is a very simple one; it depicts the sterility of the intellectual life, and the blessed possibility of curing the vacuous dreariness which that may bring, by draughts of love

and contact with the realities of life. Howard Kennedy has been playing the academical game, which is a very good game in its way, and amusing himself with his pupils, as a man may spin teetotums. His sympathy and his diplomacy have been artistic rather than human. Mr. Sandys, the Vicar, is playing the clerical game too; but he does it more spontaneously, and his nature is a simpler one—so he is content. Mrs. Graves, on the other hand, is a mystic, and has learnt to look through and beyond life; while Maud is the best of all, because she lives directly in admiration, hope and love. Jack Sandys, the undergraduate, is not an attractive character, but I am not sure that he is not the most alive. The book was read in proof by an undergraduate friend of mine, and by a don; and they both agreed in thinking that.

I shall not write a sequel to *Water-springs*, though I know well enough what is happening to all my Windlow party; and if I have to say frankly why I wrote the book at all, and enclosed just that little piece of human adventure within its covers, I can only say quite simply that I did so because it appeared to me to be beautiful.

A. C. Benson.

*Come Rack! Come Rope!* I fear, is the kind of book which anyone acquainted with the history, manners and customs of the Elizabethan age, should find no difficulty in writing. For, first, to the Catholic at least, the drama is all ready-made: it would be impossible to construct a story dealing with the sufferings of priests in those days which should not have in it almost irresistible elements of pathos and terror. Against this background, then, it is very nearly inevitable that there should be set figures symbolical of human love; and equally inevitable, therefore, that the author

should see how poignant must be the conflict between innocent human love and heroic Divine Love. This, so far as the plot is concerned, is all that I have done; and, further, history has supplied one more need which imagination usually finds difficult—namely, a set of secondary characters who bear out, and cast lights and shadows upon the main theme, who take a real part in the story and who yet have—again ready-made—a reality which an author would find very hard to create. I take, therefore, no kind of pride in my plot, and hardly any in my character-drawing. Robin and Marjorie are scarcely characters; they are rather a pair of negations. They have a fortitude which is hardly more than an absence of fear; a self-sacrifice that is merely an absence of self. I am not pleased with them. People are more complex. There are certain scenes, however, with which I am pleased—for example, the imaginative presentments of the emotions of hunted priests, and, especially the descriptions of torture written from within the tortured man's own experience. It seems to me—who have never been on the rack—that I have succeeded pretty well in writing down what the rack must have felt like, and the mental states it must have induced. When I had finished writing that scene I was conscious of very distinct and even slightly painful sensations in my own wrists and ankles. Such points as these I would select for commendation; but the book itself cost me very few real emotions: it is particularly clumsy for the first 150 pages: the figures do not really live—they only ride to and fro endlessly, and supply topics of local and contemporary color—until Edmund Campion appears. He, and he alone, seems to have galvanized them into a semblance of actual life.

An *Average Man* is, I think, a very

much better book. First, with the exception of my hero's father, the characters are, I think, alive. His mother is not wholly alive; she is a bundle of mannerisms and qualities, true and consistent, but not completely united into a soul. But the rest, I think, are real. Of course many of them are exceedingly disappointing in their behavior—especially Percy—but people are, usually, disappointing. But Percy is particularly alive; he is an ill-bred snob who thinks he is a well-bred gentleman, or at any rate desires to be one; but he only desires it with certain reserves on which he will not yield, and therefore he only succeeds up to the point to which a thoroughly selfish man can attain. He gets what he wants, and therefore he falls. Mr. Main, too, the curate, is precisely the reverse; he has no reserves; and he wills instead of wanting. Therefore he gets nothing that he wants, and all that he wills. This, I think, is a true presentment of experience; and it is expressed sufficiently clearly. There are, of course, some bad mistakes in the book, some of which I recognize for myself, and others that have been pointed out to me. For instance, city clerks do not read *Comic Outs*; that is simply uncharacteristic, and, above all, as I ought to have perceived, uncharacteristic of Percy with his social ambitions. Again, even the most scheming and adroit mother in the world could not possibly have arranged a marriage between her son and Mabel in the time allotted. Again, a man who had been master of his house in Hanstead could not, in the time allowed in the book, have become so entire a nonentity at Marston. Lastly, marriages do not take place from the bridegroom's house except under very peculiar circumstances; and there were none such in Percy's case. Yet, in spite of these flaws, I think the book as a whole to be tol-

erably adequate to its theme. The two main figures—Percy and the curate—like the man and the woman in the weather-house, slowly change places with, I think, psychological fidelity; their characters unfold; and each ultimately displays his inmost soul by his actions. I have wondered sometimes whether Percy's apparent conversion is properly pictured, but I do not doubt that, whether this is so or not, such an event is a real feature of life, that it happens under the circumstances and produces the effects which I have described. In short, I am pretty satisfied with the work; and I think that the very deep depression under which I suffered when the book first appeared arose from the dismal history related in it, rather than from a consciousness that that history was ill-written.

Robert Hugh Benson.

The author of *Magic* ought to be told plainly that his play, like most other efforts of that person, has been treated with far too much indulgence in the public press. I will glide mercifully over the more glaring errors which the critics have overlooked—as that no Irishman could become so complete a cad merely by going to America—that no young lady would walk about in the rain so soon before it was necessary to dress for dinner—that no young man, however American, could run round a Duke's grounds in the time between one bad epigram and another—that Dukes never allow the middle classes to encroach on their gardens so as to permit a doctor's lamp to be seen there—that no sister, however eccentric, could conduct a slightly frivolous love-scene with a brother going mad in the next room—that the Secretary disappears half way through the play without explaining himself; and the conjurer disappears at the end, with almost equal dignity. Such are

the candid criticisms I should address to Mr. G. K. Chesterton, were he my friend. But as I have always found him my worst enemy, I will confine myself to the criticism which seems to me most fundamental and final.

Of course I shall not differ from any of the dramatic critics: I am bursting with pride to think that I am (for the first time) a dramatic critic myself. Besides, I never argue except when I am right. It is rather a curious coincidence that in every controversy in which I have been hitherto, I have always been entirely right. But if I pretended for one moment that *Magic* was not a pretty badly written play, I should be entirely wrong. I may be allowed to point out the secret of its badness.

By the exercise of that knowledge of all human hearts which descends on any man (however unworthy) the moment he is a dramatic critic, I perceive that the author of *Magic* originally wrote it as a short story. It is a bad play, because it was a good short story. In a short story of mystery, as in a Sherlock Holmes story, the author and the hero (or villain) keep the reader out of the secret. Conan Doyle and Sherlock Holmes know all about it; and everybody else feels as silly as Watson. But the drama is built on that grander secrecy which was called the Greek irony. In the drama, the audience must know the truth when the actors do not know it. That is where the drama is truly democratic: not because the audience shouts, but because it knows—and is silent. Now I do quite seriously think it is a weakness in a play like *Magic* that the audience is not in the central secret from the start. Mr. G. S. Street put the point with his usual unerring simplicity by saying that he could not help feeling disappointed with the conjurer because he had hoped he would

turn into the Devil. If anyone knows any real answer to this genuine and germane criticism, I will see that it is conveyed to the author.

There are two more criticisms of which I will take note, because they can best be dealt with by an impartial critic like myself. The first concerns that paralysis of the mind which scientists now called Pragmatism, and which is represented in this play as freezing for an instant the intellect of an Anglican priest. I know it is ignominious to talk of artistic aims that aim and do not hit. But the idea of the scepticism of the priest was perfectly simple. It was that there should be no faith or fancy left to support the supernatural, but only the experience of it. There is one man who believes—and he believes so strongly that he wishes he didn't. In the same way, all the people in *Magic* are purposely made good: so that there shall be no

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villain, except the great invisible villain.

The other criticism which the present critic may criticize is the frequent observation that a soliloquy is old-fashioned—and by "old-fashioned" they always mean artificial or unnatural. Now I should say that a soliloquy is the most natural thing in the world. It is no more artificial than a conscience; or a habit of walking about the room. I constantly talk to myself. If a man does not talk to himself, it is because he is not worth talking to. Soliloquy is simply the strength and liberty of the soul, without which each one of us would be like that nobleman in one of the most brilliant and bizarre of Mr. Henry James's tales, who did not exist at all except when others were present. Every man ought to be able to argue with himself. And I have tried to do it in this article.

*G. K. Chesterton.*

## THE BULBARIUM.

"Hooray!" shouted my cousin George Biffin, rising to greet me as I entered his sitting-room. "You're the very man I'm looking for. You're just in time to help with my bulbarium!"

"Your what?" I enquired, with pardonable curiosity.

"Reginald, your classical education has been sadly neglected. Bulbarium is a term of Latin origin, derived from the two words *bulbus*, a bulb, and *arium*, an area or place, signifying a place for bulbs, a bulbarium. These," he continued, pointing to two large round-shouldered sacks leaning wearily against the coalscuttle—"these are the supplies of moss-fibre and crushed oyster-shell. Here are the bulbs"—he indicated a number of paper bags with white labels, carefully arranged upon the sitting-table. "And if you'll fol-

low me down to the telephone-room I'll show you about forty vases, bowls, pots and soup-tureens which I have prepared for their reception."

I have always entertained a morbid dislike of telephone-rooms, but I meekly accompanied my cousin downstairs. On the floor of a chill and cheerless apartment on the ground floor stood a large bath containing a tin water-can, while all around was ranged row upon row of empty jars of every dimension.

"Are you going to have a bath?" I innocently inquired.

"No, no," my cousin answered testily; "that's what we mix the compost in."

"Mix the what?"

"Compost: the technical term for moss or cocoanut fibre."

"Oh, I see. But why not call it moss or cocoanut-fibre?"

George ignored my question. "I've borrowed Mother's hip-bath," he said. "I don't believe she wants it a bit—hips have gone completely out of fashion this year—and it's the very thing for the job. By the way," he added, "I wish you'd be an angel——"

"No," I interrupted firmly, "I utterly decline to be an angel. From earliest childhood experience has taught me that the angelic function invariably entails running upstairs and fetching something, and I'm much too old to run anywhere."

"Oh, very well," he sighed resignedly, "I suppose I must go myself. Don't touch anything till I come back."

George was only away about three minutes (during which I successfully resisted the temptation to touch his mother's hip-bath), and returned laden with the two sacks that I had already noticed in his sitting-room.

"I've brought a book of the rules, too," he remarked, "so that we shan't do anything silly."

"Speak for yourself," I said, "personally——"

My sentence was never completed.

"Look out! Stand clear of the gate!" shouted George, as with a vigorous heave he emptied the contents of the sacks into the bath. For a few moments the atmosphere was filled with thick yellow dust, and my eyes and lungs were choked with it.

"Now then, look alive," he added peremptorily, "we must do this thing properly. You roll up your sleeves and churn the fibre and the shell together while I keep the mixture damp with water from the can."

As I surveyed the condition of my fingers after a few minutes of this churning exercise I could not help recalling the beautiful old poem beginning:

"There is a garden in her face,

Where roses and white lilies grow," and wondering whether any modern bard might possibly be inspired to similar flights of fancy by the garden in my nails; but I knew it would be useless to try to explain such sentimental thoughts to George.

He was studying a small pink pamphlet he had produced from his pocket, and his brow was furrowed with care.

"I hope you're not letting me put in too much water," he suddenly remarked. "It says here that about four quarts to the half-bushel is enough."

"My dear George," I expostulated, "I may know how much a *quart* is, but how on earth am I to tell what half a *bushel* is like?"

"They don't seem to have taught you anything at all at Eton," he complained. "Surely you remember your table of *avoirdupois*? Two pecks one gallon—er—two gallons one peck—Wait a minute. It'll come back to me directly. Two pecks one bushel; two bushels one rod, pole or perch; two rods, poles or perches, one——"

At that moment a large lump of soaking fibre that I was engaged in kneading eluded my grasp and fell over the edge of the bath on to my left patent-leather boot, causing me to utter a somewhat unparliamentary expression.

"Reginald! I'm shocked!" said George.

"*ERI!*" I repeated; "two perches one ell; two ells one rood——"

"Oh, shut up! The compost is ready now. Let's fill the bowls."

My cousin held each jar in turn while I packed it with sodden fibre, until at last the supply of receptacles was exhausted and the bath was nearly empty.

"The question now is," said George, "where are we to put the engaw? It



says here"—he turned once more to the pamphlet—"The jars or vases should be kept in a dark but airy cellar. To ensure success they must have constant care, like a mother gives her children."

"That's all very well, George. I know I'm old-fashioned and all that, but I must insist that very few mothers moisten their young children and then put them in a dark and airy cellar."

"I believe they'd do best under Mother's bed," said George.

"But would that be healthy or hygienic?"

"For Mother, do you mean, or the bulbs?"

"For either," I said.

George was clearly more concerned about the bowls. "It says here," he went on, "that they must on no account be kept too wet, but that if they become dry, even for half-an-hour——"

Punch.

"Like me," I suggested. "Mixing fibre's thirsty work."

"If they get dry for even half-an-hour," he repeated, "they go blind."

"That's just what I meant."

"Yes," he continued, "Mother's bed's the very place. She'll never know."

"Poor Mother," I could not help remarking. "Butchered to make a Roman Hyacinth!"

With a great deal of effort we carried the bowls upstairs one by one, and deposited them beneath the maternal couch. When at last our labors were at an end we descended to the Library, thankful that our task was safely accomplished.

As we entered the room George gave a sudden start, and his gaze became rivetted upon the paper bags that strewed the writing-table.

"Good lord!" he gasped.

"What is it?"

"We've forgotten the bulbs!" said George.

## MORE POPULAR ENGLISH.\*

We return to the consideration of the old proverbs and phrases collected by Mrs. Wright in her book, "Rustic Speech and Folk Lore" (Oxford University Press). "As right as pie," we imagine, is not of culinary origin, but refers to those "rules called the Pie," the number and hardness and manifold changings of, which so much exercised our Reformers. "As sure as God's in Gloucester" we have never ourselves heard, but we remember the eighteenth-century lines on Warburton's "Divine Legation of Moses":—

"And proved, as sure as God's in Gloster,

That Moses was a rank impostor."

We lately came across the following

\* The Living Age, Jan. 19, 1914.

severe reference to the phrase in D'Aubigné's "History of the Reformation": "In the sixteenth century Gloucestershire was particularly admired by priests and friars, and a familiar oath among them was 'as sure as God's in Gloster.'" It referred no doubt to the number of religious houses and foundations in the county. A modern variant is "as sure as the Devil's in London." The charm of these old phrases is that they are, many of them, as old as England, and that in using them we are one with all our fathers. Even such a common colloquialism as "he's the man for my money," is centuries old. In a sixteenth-century Somersetshire ballad, for instance, bewailing the Dissolution of the Monasteries, we find:—

"Our Blessed Lady's Psalter

*Shall for my money goe.*

There are such pretty prayers there

(The Bible cannot show."

The phrase, no doubt, was used by the men who carved the front of Wells Cathedral, and painted and gilded it to last till Doomsday. The Reformation wrought, however, one great change in the popular speech. English proverbs and sayings are extraordinarily lacking in Christian coloring. Mrs. Wright quotes "He'd steal the Cross off an ass's back." This is delightful, but we have never heard it, and we strongly suspect it to be not English, but Irish. A few proverbs of the Saints seem to have lingered into the seventeenth century, perhaps into the eighteenth, but hardly longer. There is, for instance, "to follow any one like a Tantorey pig." This, of course, refers to St. Anthony, and is equivalent to "C'est Saint Roche et son chien." The phrase occurs in Swift, and was no doubt common in his day, but we question whether anyone now living has ever heard it spoken naturally and spontaneously. An old English name for the little pig which is found in every litter was "the Anthony pig." In our own experience, this creature was and still is always called "the dawling," no doubt a corruption of "darling." It is of thrilling interest to read that a name given to the Wigan colliers is "Wigan Hearty-Christers," from the old oath, "Heart of Christ," said to be peculiar to them. The oaths of medieval England never died out in Lancashire. We are not sure, however, that some of our most ordinary phrases may not have an unsuspected Christian origin. Take, for example, the common saying: "It's a pity." The meaning evidently is, "It's a sight or an object calculated to excite pity." This is precisely the sense of the word "Pietà," the image of the dead Christ in His

Mother's arms. In Old England a representation of the Five Wounds was called "the Image of Pity." The Italian equivalent of "what a pity," by the way, is "che peccato," "what a sin!" while the German word for it means "damage, loss."

As one looks back on the past, old phrases crowd upon the memory. We do not find in this book "Fine words butter no parsnips," but we joyfully recognize, "You might as well be a toad under a harrow." This last signifies to lead a life harassed by work, if not by actual ill-usage and persecution. There is a delightful phrase for bread and cheese, which we confess we did not know—"cold turkey pie." This is full of that ironical cheerfulness and contentment, that making the best of things, that liking what you've got if you haven't got what you like, which is the very breath and spirit of all proverbs. One is reminded of the two convicts in "Our Mutual Friend" cutting up their dry bread, and saying, "This is an omelette," "This is a sausage," "Will you take a wing or a leg?"

"Sympathy without relief

Is like mustard without beef"

is a rhyme we remember very well.

"As deep as Garrick" was a very favorite saying of the old lady we have so often quoted. We supposed it to refer to the great actor and the subtle verisimilitude of his impersonations, but the folk-lorists say it is a corruption of "as deep as Gerard," an old folk-name for the Devil, like "old Nick," or "le vieux Guillaume." Be this as it may, the fiddler Paganini certainly obtained proverbial celebrity. "To fiddle like Paganini" one often heard. He was said to fiddle on one string, and to fiddle people mad. "To hang up one's fiddle" was to leave one's company manners behind when one came home. This would make a very good text for a sermon on the

duty of respect and courtesy to the people one lives with. Courtesy should begin at home. "A step-mother's blessing" is an excellent term for a bit of loose skin at the base of the finger-nail.

How close to life this old language was! "One's as deep in the mud as the other in the mire" is a proverb we still sometimes hear. Popular language always delights in alliteration—it is a part of the innate rhythmical ballad-making faculty at present submerged under an alien culture. "He's only ninepence to the shilling," again, said of someone who is not quite "all there," is very graphic. "I told him to his head" we used to hear often in Yorkshire. It has a robust Shakespearean sound, as of a defiance hurled by the burgesses at the head of a captain come up to assault the flinty ribs of some contemptuous town.

"I told Sir Geoffrey to his head" a William Morris poem might very well begin. "Like a chip in porridge," meaning something that is quite useless, is a phrase the present writer is very fond of, if only because his own father so often used it. "To grin like a Cheshire cat" was the very commonest of sayings. All these phrases are born of that mother wit, which is so much better than anything that can be learned from books.

Apart from proverbs and phrases, there are many wonderfully descriptive words which have never got into the dictionaries, which are or were current in all parts of England. The first that comes to mind is "peart," one of the words of our earliest remembrance. It is quite distinct from "pert," and means "brisk, lively, cheerful." "Trapse" again, meaning to tramp about the miry roads, is admirably expressive. It belongs to our own mother-tongue, which is Sussex. "Stivering," again, was a very good

word for resolutely tramping over a bad road. We do not agree with Mrs. Wright that "illify" is a corruption of "villify," but think that it is literally to make out to be bad, to impute evil, as "justify" was said by Protestant divines to mean "to account to be righteous." We always remember hearing it, though it was looked upon as vulgar. It is true popular English, which is something quite distinct from that distortion of literary English which is always going on, as when a Church-warden recently observed to the writer at an Archdeacon's dinner, "These eels are something excelsior." "Clutter" again is barely admitted inside the covers of dictionaries, but it is an excellent word, and to the writer, part of the viaticum of language given him at the start for the needs of the journey of life. We always said as children "as lief" for "as soon," and "liefer" for "sooner." This is the best of good old English. "I had liefer be in that pain till Doomsday than come to Heaven otherwise than by Him," said Mother Julian of Norwich. The old word "rathe" for "early" was preserved in the name of the early ripe apple, "rathe-ripe." It was pronounced like "rather." We remember Milton's "rathe primrose" lighting up for us the meaning of the word. The old word for a bun was a "wig," and we remember well those round cakes sprinkled with caraway seeds, which we always called "seedy wigs." We see now the little shop where they were sold, with its windows filled with rows of glass jars of peppermint, bull's-eyes, barley sugar, sugar almonds, and brandy snaps, all the most excellent of their kind. Other words springing from the living tree of English not clipped and trimmed into the literary shape, were "to scrooge," for "to crowd, to press," "orts" for broken remnants, an "atomy" for "a living skeleton," "a

bag of skin and bone" ("what a poor little atomy!") it would be said of a half-starved child), "lew-warm" for tepid, "fantigue" for excitement, "dowly" for "dreary, depressed," "tetchy" (not to be confused with touchy) for "contrary," "testy" (always pronounced "tessy") for "fretful," "a mort" for a great quantity, "casualty" (pronounced "cazzelty") for "unwell," and, of course, continually "dishabille." Now these are all, most of them, good words, many of them still dictionary words, but tending, so it seems to us, to disappear. "A nonimy" is a most admirable word for a long, wearisome rigmarole. Mrs. Wright derives it from the preface of the friar's sermon, "In Nomine Patris." We confess it appears to us that it may be a corruption of the word "homily," and may preserve the popular estimate of the discourses so named that were issued to be read to the people in church in the days of New Learning. "To rue" for "to regret" is a most beautiful piece of popular and poetic English, still used

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all over the North. One word which is found in Chaucer, and which, of course, speaks for itself, we hear frequently in the village where these lines are written, "a parle" for "a talk, a chat." "She must have her parle—she is so fond of her parle," it will be said. Then there were the local names for birds and flowers, differing in every part of England, like the Staffordshire "proud tailor" for goldfinch, enshrined in Dr. Johnson's Dictionary. In Sussex in our own childhood, a wagtail was always called "a dishwasher." "Roman willow" is a charming name for *llac*, still common in Lincolnshire.

We sit over these pages, which call up so many bygone scenes and people, and evoke so much of the old life of England, as some old monk or jester, say, in the year 1500, might sit by a fire of the boughs and trunks of the secular ivy of Warwick Castle, which had been growing since the reign of Stephen, might watch it burning red and green and blue, and muse of a vanished world by the elfin flame.

## BOOKS AND AUTHORS.

The actual statement, "Love is all in all," the thought vivifying and animating Josephine Preston Peabody's airy and subtle comedy, "The Wolf of Gubbio," from its first line to the last word of its closing verse, is so ingeniously evaded that one perceives it but slowly. The very name of St. Francis of Assisi really explains the author's intention, but she has no mind to be understood immediately, still less does she desire that her drama shall be seen to be both comedy and lesson, as she unfolds it, in solo, chorus, duet, and trio, until the closing act. Then, indeed, King and peasant, narrow worldling and unselfish saint,

and self-effacing friend and self-forgetting mother join in begging that all those self-exiled from love may come into its warmth. In its printed form the poem charms both heart and spirit, but to the seeing eye and the apprehending mind its spell has proved to be irresistible. Mrs. Marks, as the author is now generally called, dedicates her book to "Lionel my little son and Lionel his father." The stanza in ballad form serving as prologue is a perfect description of St. Francis, and the epilogue is spoken by him as he stands between his tent-curtains and calls, "Come, little brother Wolves, come in, come hither,

Out of the cold." Mr. and Mrs. Mowgli of Kiplingland and their four gray squires will surely accept the invitation. Houghton Mifflin Company.

Three murders and one attempt at murder certainly make a copious allowance of tragedy for a single story, the more so that they all take place upon a schooner-yacht with only nineteen persons on board, passengers and crew. Yet these are the main ingredients of Mary Roberts Rinehart's mystery story "The After House" (Houghton Mifflin Co.). There is, to be sure, a slight thread of romance also, but this is almost negligible. Indeed, the final chapter, in which this romance finds its climax, might as well have been dispensed with. The reader would have guessed it any way. The real climax comes a chapter earlier, when the "Thing" is disclosed. What that climax is, it is perfectly safe to say not one reader in a hundred will have guessed before he reaches it. Who committed the crimes and what was the motive which prompted them,—this is the mystery which holds the reader's attention to the last with a power which does credit to the author's skill and ingenuity. There has been quarreling a-plenty, and hard drinking and enough animosities engendered to furnish abundant motives for the crimes, but these serve merely to supply false clues and to set the reader conjecturing along misleading lines. At one point the reader is irritated by the apprehension that he is to be fooled by the interposition of the supernatural, and he feels, for a moment, that he is being trifled with, for an author may do anything with the aid of the supernatural, but all this passes before the story ends. And how does the story end? That it is not the reviewer's business to tell. But it may be truthfully said that lovers of

the tragic and mysterious will find this one of the cleverest and most baffling stories of that type.

Miss Mary Caroline Crawford's "The Romance of the American Theatre" (Little, Brown & Co.) is a comprehensive and sympathetic study of the history of the stage in this country from the first recorded performances in the first half of the eighteenth century to the present day. As she explains in her "Foreword" Miss Crawford has approached her subject from the standpoint of dominant personalities and general tendencies; and her treatment of it in this way has kept her work from becoming a mere catalogue of plays and actors. Readers who have in mind only the decadent tendencies of the stage to-day, and its persistent catering to the sensational and the indecent may think that Miss Crawford is possessed by an absurd idealism when she declares that nobility of soul is indispensable to a player who is to interpret adequately life's great emotions, but the history of the American stage furnishes not a few examples of this high order. Miss Crawford has made diligent search among old records, newspapers, memoirs and biographies for her material; she writes *con amore* and with enthusiasm, but also discriminatingly and with moderation; and, while she adheres to her chosen subject, she gives incidentally and inevitably intimate glimpses of American life and thought during the period covered by her survey. Working in a field hitherto practically untraversed she has produced a work of lively present interest and enduring value. The book is illustrated with eighty or more pictures,—mostly portraits or reproductions of old prints. Among them is a copy of the oldest known American playbill, dating back to November, 1753.